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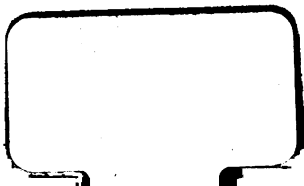
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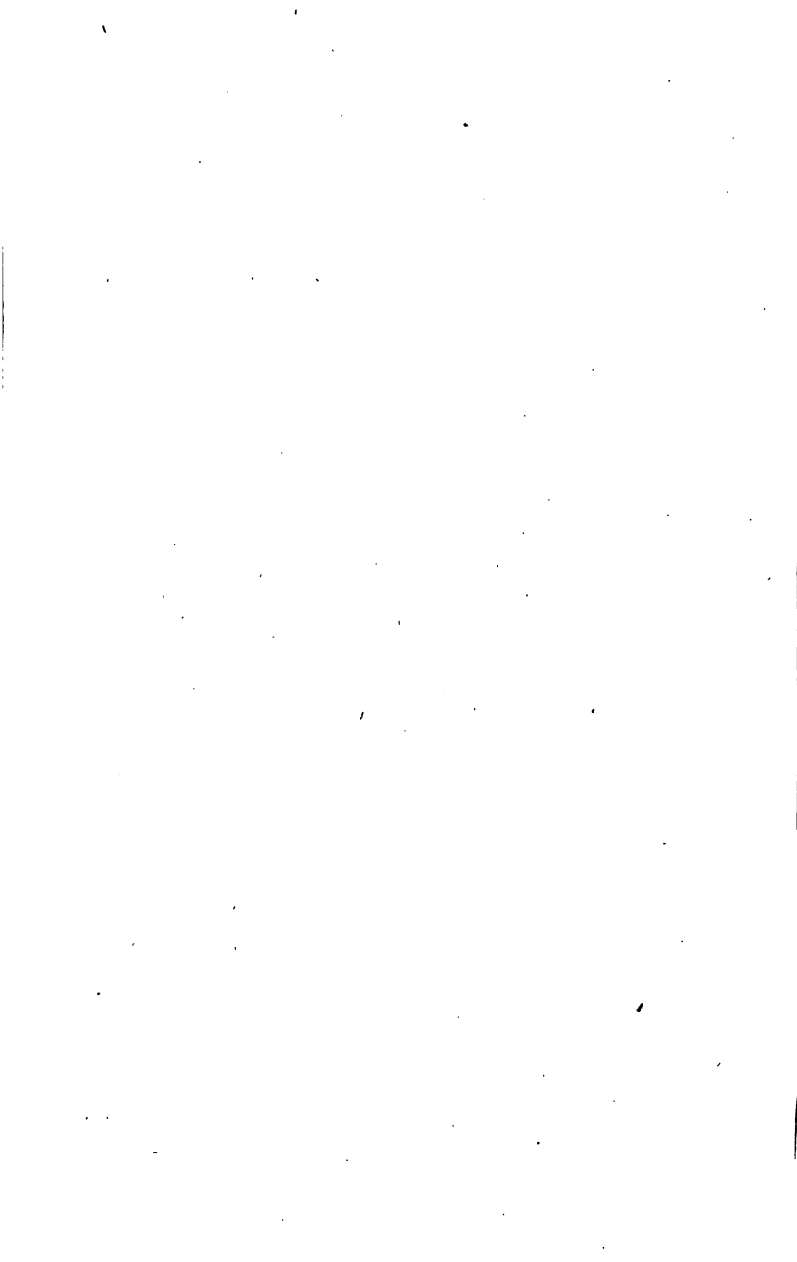
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A. B. Murray -

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MAN A SOUL;

OR

THE INWARD, AND THE EXPERIMENTAL,

EVIDENCES OF CHRISTIANITY.

Artemas Bonners

By A. B. MUZZEY,

"And the Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life: and man became a LIVING SOUL."



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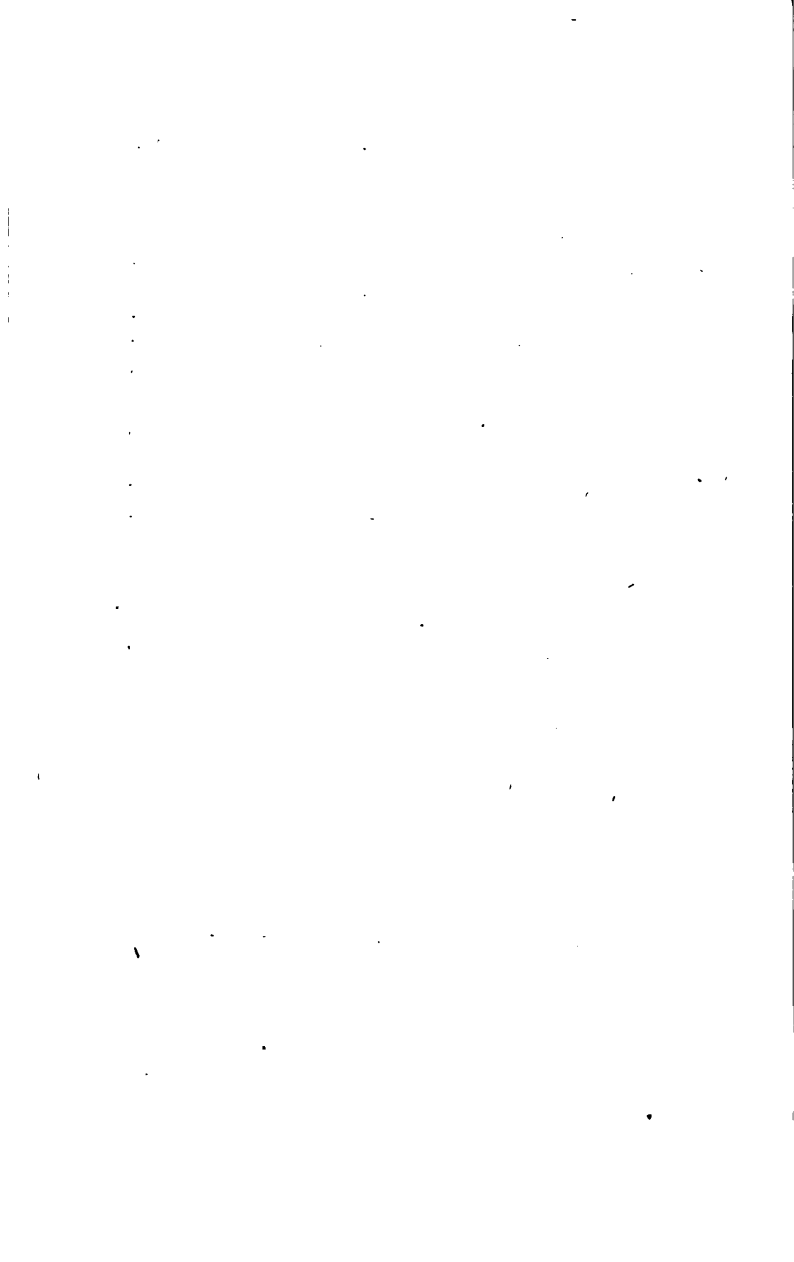
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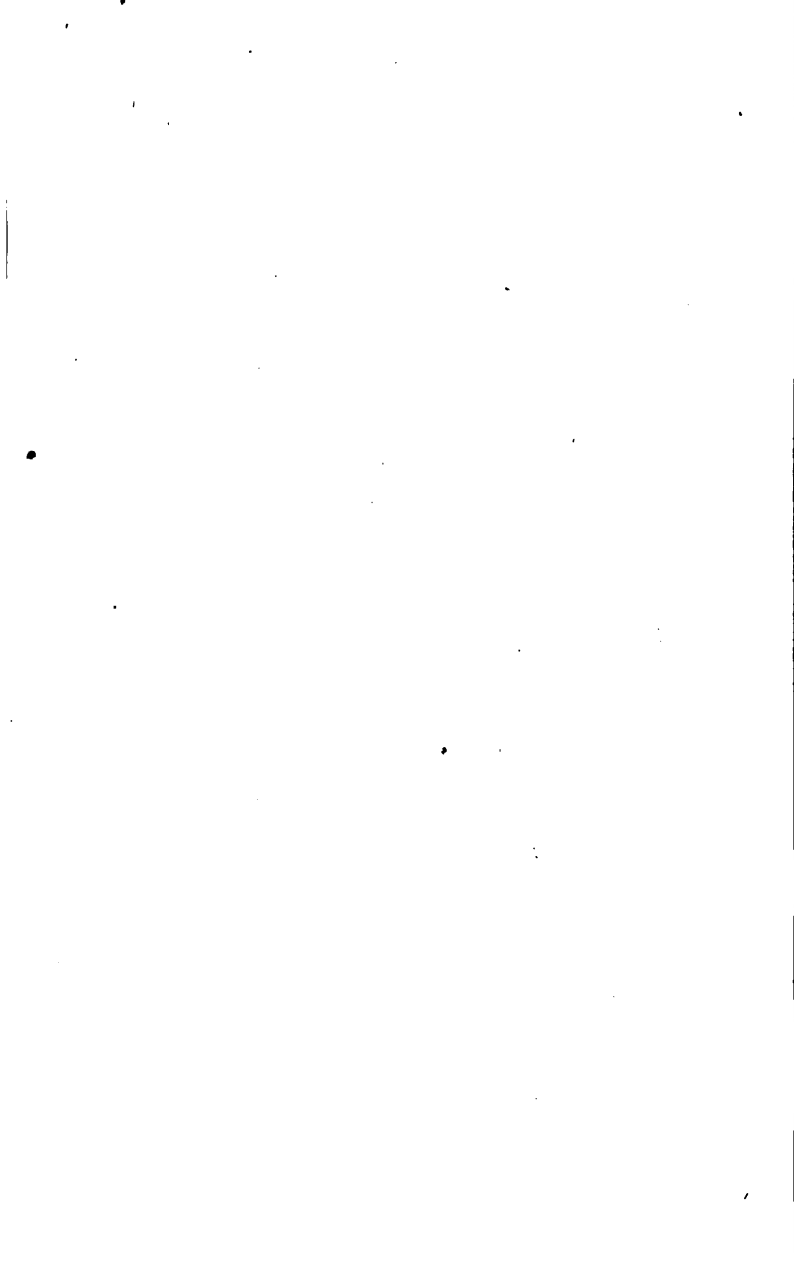
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MAN A SOUL.



MAN A SOUL.

INTRODUCTION.

JAMES R. had recently come to reside within the pale of my duties. I had met him occasionally in society, and found him possessed of a mind naturally clear, and accurate. The topics we discussed were uniformly, however, of a secular character. I observed him, as the Sabbath returned, seated in his place at church with the air of a believer. But ere long he was summoned by Providence to a severe test of his faith. His family had been long predisposed to that resistless destroyer, consumption. From sure symptoms he at length saw that, in the dim and fatal procession, *his* place was fixed. The hour was near, which must bear his earthly man to those silent portals, that from time to time had closed on the friends he mourned. "But my Spirit," said he to an anxious sister who had ever shared his deepest feelings, "my Spirit, whither will that go? Will it indeed survive this body? O these gloomy doubts."

With a heart thus stricken and desponding, he at length made known his apprehensions to me. "I feel," said he, "that my days are numbered,

and soon to be finished. I have seen many, in my situation, rendered calm and even cheerful by the power of Religion. It is my sincere desire to gain that composure myself. But, from my earliest recollections, the gospel has seemed to me incredible. I dare not rest all my hopes on that frail support." "For what reasons," I inquired, "does Christianity appear to you incredible?" "My greatest difficulty," said he, "in attempting to believe it, has arisen from the impressions I received of it from my mother. She taught me that, after we die, we are borne to a world of endless duration, there to be either perfectly happy or perfectly miserable. This I found it not easy to understand. For I was sure that, while on some days I was filled with trouble and pain, on others I was gay and light-hearted. 'What can they do, mother, in heaven that shall make them always happy?' 'They glorify God, my son,' she replied, 'and enjoy him forever.' This answer, although utterly unintelligible, inspired me with awe, and for the time, put silence on my lips.

"Musing on the mysteries of this subject, I one day inquired of my mother what I must do to go to that delightful place which they call heaven? 'You must have grace,' said she; 'your heart must be changed. You were born in sin,—totally depraved,—you now hate God. Before you can

be saved you must have a new nature and love God.' 'But, mother, I do love him. When you have told me how many good things he gives me, I could not help loving him.' 'Oh! my child, there is no value in that kind of love. It is no better than the feeling you have towards me and your father, a "natural affection," and that is worth nothing. You must love God without thinking what he has done for you, or any thing you wish him to do for you.' 'This is strange, mother, and more than you ever bid me feel toward you. I remember reading in the Bible that we should "love God *because he first loved us.*" But I will try to forget all the favors he has done me, and then love him.' 'Do not think, my child,' she said immediately, 'that *you* can do anything. You must wait till the Holy Spirit operates on your heart, before you think to be changed.' 'That is very hard,' said I, 'you told me I must have grace, or else I should go to that awful, burning lake ;—that I must love God, or I could not go to heaven. And now you say I cannot do any thing to get grace, nor to love God.' 'It is very wrong for you to talk so, my son,' said she; 'the Bible declares it to be a true doctrine, and we must believe it.'

"Thus it was in all my conversations with her and my father. They always, indeed, ex-

plained their views of religion, as far as they were able.—But I found that, uniformly, where their reason failed to assist them, they ended by saying, ‘it is a mystery,’—‘you must not ask so many questions.’ Now, although my understanding has helped me to comprehend some things which I then could not, yet until I left home, and even up to this hour, I have been distressed with doubts.”

As I looked on the countenance of that young man, and saw his brow channelled, and his eye restless, through the bitterness of his spirit, I was touched by his condition, and felt anxious to afford him relief. I endeavored to withdraw his mind from those disputed doctrines, which interest those who are in the midst of health and vigor, but are not found to give peace to a death-bed. From that stand-point, the mind naturally turns toward the great practical and experimental truths of religion. It was so in his case. When I spoke of the deathless nature of the Soul, and could fix his thoughts on the Inward Man, his eye would kindle, and his face would tell me that *here* he saw gleams of truth. He had not been highly educated, yet his native good sense enabled him to appreciate a Rational Faith.

Through a succession of interviews, God was pleased to bless to him the words of my lips. By imperceptible degrees, the cloud of unbelief

passed from his horizon, and the sun of Righteousness shed a healing beam on his mind. I found him habitually disposed to converse on the purity, the clearness, and the consoling power, of the gospel. It gave me joy to find that his mother,—she who had given him his earliest lessons on religion,—had arrived to witness his departure. As he spoke of the firmness of his faith, of his calm trust, of his sublime anticipations, and his hope in heaven, I saw a tear start in her eye. “Can it be,” I read in that eye, “that this other gospel, can confer such peace of mind, such seeming piety and true submission?” His faith appeared steadily to increase. “As the outward man perished, the Inward man was renewed, day by day.” His last audible words were, “I am only going before you; we shall meet again.”

The case of this young man represents, I believe, that of many, many, others. In the hope of doing a slight service to such, and of leading all who may read these chapters to look deeply for the foundations of the Christian Faith, I have committed to the press the substance of several conversations I had with that interesting individual. The form, in which it is done may be too abstract to interest the common reader. Should a philo-

sophical mind look into this little book, I am sure he will see, at once, its lack of profoundness. But, such as it is, I commend it to the Charity of my fellow-men, and to the Blessing of God.

MAN A SOUL.

CHAPTER I.

MATTER AND SPIRIT.

WHAT is man ? **How** is he constituted ? **Is** his nature simple, indivisible, and uncompounded ? **Or** does it consist of powers and faculties unlike each other, essentially or partially, and of different tendencies ? **The** answer to these inquiries will enable us to judge whether he has within him any broad and secure foundation for Religion.

Man presents to the senses only an animal nature. **There** are those who maintain that this is all there is of him ; that when his body dies, his being is extinct. **But** what is the body ? **It** is simply a mass of matter. **What** then is matter ? **It** is an inactive, dead substance. **It** cannot move itself. **The** clod of dust would remain forever where it is, were no impulse given it from abroad. **Is** it transformed into another thing, when converted into a human body ? **No**, it is still matter ; inert, incapable, of itself, of the least motion, or even effort. **Unless** some new ingredient be added

to it, the clay must remain clay, torpid and powerless.

Is man so? No, we find him endowed with the power of self-motion. But whence do his movements proceed? From an agent within. Through this agent we think, compare, and judge, all processes which are efforts of some principle differing from matter. Again we can decide how we will conduct, and which, of two objects, to prefer and choose. The will is unlike our animal faculties; it can operate in whatever direction we please, and is wholly independent of our outward nature. Man has, furthermore, a remarkable faculty which enables him to judge between right and wrong, to feel the obligations of the former and enjoy its rewards, and to suffer from the latter under a sense of evil desert. He has, furthermore, moral sentiments, the capacity to love and the contrary, and by so doing to injure or bless. Beyond these endowments we have spiritual powers, a capacity to love an Infinite Goodness and Wisdom, and to conceive of a world of spirits, and to fashion our hearts and lives according to its requirements.

Now all these gifts are distinct from matter. We can conceive of that in its most perfect state, yet having neither self-motion, will, moral sentiments, nor spiritual tendencies or capacities.

Man then has something in his nature distinct from matter, qualities not derived originally from that, and not afterward sustained by, or dependent upon, it. He is indebted for his character, as man, to some principle or existence independent of matter.

But the argument now adduced may fail perfectly to convince all that man is but a material being. Let us then push our investigations still farther. We have arrived at a principle in man different in its nature from matter. It is what the religionist calls *spirit*. But how know we that there is such a thing in existence? This body we can see and touch, and we therefore know it exists; but who ever saw or touched the thing called spirit?

Let us seek to penetrate into spirit. What is it? What is its nature, essence, or substance? We must confess that we know nothing on this subject. But the same difficulty presses us in relation to matter; for we know nothing of the essence of that. All we can say of it, is that it exhibits certain phenomena or appearances. Precisely as much as this is true of spirit. It operates, acts, appears, we well know how; but this is all we can say of it. What it is, in either spirit or matter, that appears as it does, or why they exhibit the phenomena they do, we know not.

The fact just stated is one of no slight importance. The soul seems to you a shadowy thing, a thing you cannot realize to exist distinct from the body; and the reason of this is, that you cannot perceive it by your senses. But matter you can perceive. It is a solid, palpable, and therefore a real thing. Yet how did you obtain your knowledge of its reality? How did you ascertain what you know so certainly in regard to the body, for example? All we know about it is what it *manifests* to our eye, ear, or touch, that is certain effects it produces upon us. The senses do not tell us what constitutes matter, its essence, or substance. Of that they leave us profoundly ignorant.

Turn we now to spirit. What do we know of that? We are entirely unacquainted, as in the other case, with its abstract nature; we know not what spirit is, nor how it acts. But the operations and the effects of spirit are as evident to those who observe them as the light of the sun is to the eye. You are as certain that you think and feel as you are that you are reading the page now before you, or that you ever hear words which cause you to feel an emotion. The actions of the mind or soul within us, are as distinctly and as certainly performed as are the actions of our mortal body. We know not how the mind governs

the body, why, for example, a volition can raise the arm; but we know that it does this. We have, consequently, just as much proof of the existence of spirit, as we have of that of matter. We understand the essence of neither; but we perceive the effects of both. Why then should we doubt the reality of spiritual, any more than of material, things?

If what has already been said can be relied upon as true, it must follow that the value of the evidence for spirit is as great as—nay even greater than—that of the evidence for matter. How am I informed of the existence of any material object, the floor, for example, now beneath my feet? By one of my senses, that of feeling. But how does this sense give me the information I have now? It produces an impression on my mind, that is on my spiritual nature. That impression is all I am really certain there exists in the case. There may or there may not be in reality a substance beneath my feet. All I know on the subject is what my mind perceives; and that is, that the sense of touch appears to inform me of the existence of the floor. If the impression made on my mind, which is a perfectly spiritual operation, be a deception, then there is no floor under my feet. To question the fact may

seem an absurdity. Yet why should it? Because no one doubts the reality of the impressions made on his mind through his senses. But why does he not doubt it? Because that were to doubt his own identity, to doubt whether he thinks, and feels, to doubt in fine his own existence. This we never do, because we are *conscious* of thought, feeling and being. The soul takes direct cognizance of its own acts, and this cognizance constitutes its certainty of every thing else. I will to perform an act. Here is an exercise of conscious power, and I cannot be deceived in regard to it. I love my neighbor; this is an exercise of conscious feeling. I can no more be deceived, in respect to the reality of my affection, than I can be in relation to any experience of my mind, and consequently as experience alone testifies on the point, no more than I can be deceived in regard to the very existence of my mind.

Now belief is a spiritual operation; it is an immaterial work. But it is also a necessity of our very being. We must believe something. There is no man living, who does not believe more or less. Take the veriest skeptic on earth. He who listens to the solemn utterances of the pulpit with no confidence whatever, who regards the names God, and Heaven, and the Soul as mere dreams, is

after all, a firm believer. First, he believes in the existence of his own mind; he never questions that fact. He has a perfect assurance of the existence of that intelligent, loving and acting, individual whom he calls self. He would as soon think of denying the existence of the earth he treads, and of all that we call matter, as to deny his own personal existence. Next, he believes in the operations of his own mind. On this point he never wavers; he is certain that he thinks and feels. Furthermore, he believes in the results of thought, and in the opinions formed by his mind. He believes in his skeptical hypothesis. He either doubts it or he does not. If he does not doubt it, then he makes himself a believer, for he believes that he does not doubt it. If he is certain that he does doubt, that certainty is a matter of belief. So that skepticism itself is a strong argument for the reality of faith, and for the certainty of some at least of its objects. It assures us that spirit is a reality.

Another view which leads me to place more confidence in spirit than in matter is this. It is less fluctuating and mutable than that. Its operations vary, but it is itself unchangeable. We sometimes think that if the soul could be taken hold of and brought out to view as distinctly as the body is, and if it could be made to appear as

solid and permanent as that does to the senses, Religion would not seem to us so dim and unreal a thing as it now does.

But let us examine this point. Matter, instead of standing out so prominently, is, we have already seen, so far as its essence or constituent qualities are concerned, as much hidden from us as spirit. We know nothing of it except its operations, and just as much, and in the same way too, do we know of the soul.

Then, for its stability, matter, instead of being that permanent thing we imagine it to be, is, in truth, full of changes, unstable, and passing through constant variations. Decay and renovation, life and death, are working in it perpetual alterations. The body we inhabit is continually wasting away, and calls for new nourishment, and is preserved in life and health only by a conflict with its destructible tendencies.

But the Soul, the mind, the conscious man, undergoes no such changes. It is always substantially the same, never losing its strict identity, never, in this important aspect, any other than it has been from the first hour of its existence. Consciousness affords us a certainty that we are the same individuals we ever have been. That conviction is never lost, and never falters so long as reason remains. The Soul enjoys indeed the

high prerogative of a literal immutability. It is in the image of Him who created it, of that Being "with whom is no variableness, nor shadow of turning." Can we then regard its interests, spiritual things, with distrust, and as of a doubtful character? Are they, in this view of them, entitled to less confidence than the qualities and operations of matter, of this assemblage of things around us, "which waxeth old, and is folded as a garment, and is changed, and fails?"

There are other points in which spirit is distinct from, and certainly not inferior to, matter. The Soul is an indivisible principle; it is one and entire. I am conscious of an unchangeable personal identity. There has been no moment, from my earliest infancy, in which I did not feel myself a simple, uncompounded spirit, the same amid all outward changes.

But matter is divisible. This is one of its distinguishing and most prominent features. There is no portion of it so small that it cannot be divided. Change, increase, and decomposition, are ever going forward in the material creation. Our bodies are daily parting with their identity. My present physical frame is altogether a new thing compared with what I called my body in childhood. Were matter and spirit one, I should, therefore, have long ago ceased to be that individ-

ual whom I call self. But since I feel myself to be the same being I have ever been, the distinctness of my body from my soul or self is certain. The superiority of the soul follows from its indivisibility. It is as true here as it is everywhere else, that division is weakness, union strength.

There is still another aspect in which the soul rises above the body. All spirits are capable of assimilation and union. Bodies can only come in contact. Matter is impenetrable; its nature forbids one portion of it to identify itself with another, or to share with it the space which it requires for itself. Not so with spirits. You can only join hands with another, but your heart may become one with his. "Marriage," it has been said, "consists in making man and woman one spirit in two bodies." This is the most perfect union of which our nature is susceptible. We see hence, that though "there are many operations of the spirit," and always must be many, yet all spirits may be virtually one. So far as that which constitutes the true, essential, and permanent, man is concerned, that is in mind, principles and affections, we may be strictly one. How transcendent and superior is the soul, when seen in this light.

If the preceding views are correct, I see not what ground there is for boasting, on the part of

the body, or for distrust on the part of the soul. Instead of taking our stand proudly upon matter and bringing all things into subjection to that, we should consider rather how little we in reality know about it. That it is a solid, extended, indivisible, and impenetrable something, is the amount of our knowledge. What it is, what constitutes its being, or essence, we know not. Why it is moved by the mind; how it operates; in what manner and by what means it affects the mind, a distinct and independent principle, as it to some extent does; we know not. Within these narrow limits is all our knowledge on this great subject embraced.

Now to say, under these circumstances, that matter is supreme; that we will believe nothing, admit nothing to be true, which falls not within these limits, only what we can see, hear, taste, feel, is certainly irrational. To assert that the immense range of facts, experiences and realities, affirmed to exist, and to lie beyond these limits, are all but an illusion, is not only to disparage, but to annihilate, the very instrument which reveals to us the existence of matter. It is to cast down and break the image of God, and to set up and worship in its place, truly we know not what.

Let us now examine the Soul. Although

undervalued by some, and counted as a fiction by others, how much, after all, do we know about it? We know, in the first place, that it is distinct from the body, or from matter, for it has qualities that never inhere in that. We know that it is upon spirit we depend for all our information relative to the material creation. The entire value of the testimony of the eye and the ear depends upon what the Soul shall say of their reports to it. If we impugn spirit, the senses become illusory to our minds, we can place no confidence in them, and it is to us as though they testified nothing.

As regards also the operations of the Soul, how much do we know. It thinks, and thought is a reality. It compares, judges, reasons, and reasoning is a reality. It wills; freedom of choice, self-determining power, what a glorious reality is that. It loves; with a deep, unutterable affection it intertwines its blessedness, aye, it would sometimes seem, its very existence, with kindred spirits. Do you tell me all this is but an illusion? If it be, then what is real? If the acts and motions of what you call self, being all spiritual, as they are, cannot be relied upon because they do not originate in matter, you cannot convince yourself even of your own existence.

CHAPTER II.

THE TESTIMONY OF CONSCIOUSNESS.

WE have thus far considered the Soul in its relation to the body ; we have spoken of spirit as capable of being proved to exist, and have endeavored to weigh it in the balance against matter. Let us now look at it in an absolute view. This course will oblige us to penetrate, and to survey more accurately than we yet have, the regions of Consciousness. I shall endeavor to show that the testimony of Consciousness is in favor of the truth of Religion ; and that it is entitled to the highest rank among its evidences. For this purpose I would show that it is the basis of all kinds of evidence ; and that, if we distrust it in the case of Religion, we must, to be consistent, set it aside in all other cases.

Look first at the external world. How do we determine the truth of any fact we observe by our Senses ? Through the confidence we place in the testimony of sense. And on what does that confidence rest ? On experience. But the value of experience depends wholly on our conviction of

our personal identity. If we doubt whether we are the same individuals we have always hitherto been, then the eye or ear may testify as they will, we cannot believe them. For belief in the evidence of the senses depends on the faithfulness with which we think they have uniformly conveyed truth to our minds, — in other words, it depends on our consciousness of having uniformly felt the truth of their testimony.

But consciousness is an ultimate principle ; we can bring no authority higher than its own to support it. It affords to our inward nature what the axiom does in Mathematics, a proof so plain that nothing can make it plainer. If then we admit with unhesitating readiness what our senses shew to be true, if “seeing is believing,” it is so because we rely on the evidence of consciousness. If that deceives us in the case of Religion, it may also in those thousand instances where we are daily receiving its testimony on matters of observation ; and we have then no proof that the most common occurrence we to-day witnessed was not a delusion.

We rely upon consciousness also in all our Intellectual pursuits. You affirm of a certain proposition that it is true. How did you arrive at this conclusion ? By a process of reasoning. But to reason is to compare, and to compare is to exer-

cise the memory ; and memory is of no value any farther than consciousness can be trusted. For, if you are not the very individual who reasoned a few moments since, as your memory testifies that you are, then the argument, by which you arrived at what you term the truth, is of no conceivable value. Unless you had been certain of being the same person who commenced the process of reasoning, which led to that conclusion, you could have felt no confidence in the conclusion itself. Thus is it that in every instance, where the intellect or judgment is employed, we must and do, rely ultimately upon the testimony of the same principle as that to which we turn for proof of the reality of spiritual things.

We observe next that in the decision of all Moral questions, we depend entirely upon consciousness. How know we that benevolence, gratitude, justice, love, do really exist ? Through this principle alone. You speak of duty, of doing what is right, and avoiding what is wrong. But what informs you of the existence of these distinctions. Perhaps you reply, "Conscience." But what is conscience ? Partly, it is true, an intellectual principle ; but partly also a feeling ; and this feeling is nothing more than the direct operation of consciousness. You feel a

thing to be right ; which means nothing more than that you are conscious it is right.

Now we have seen above that the intellect depends in its decisions ultimately upon consciousness. If then conscience, both as an intellectual principle, and as a moral sensibility, that is a power of feeling the right, depends thus intimately on Consciousness, we must pronounce that the basis of all our moral reasonings and decisions.

A striking illustration of the truth of our doctrine is seen in the question of man's moral freedom. We call ourselves free, that is, able to perform or to omit, any action we please. Yet what proof can you give another that you possess this liberty ? You can never convince the fatalist that you might have done differently in a single instance, from what you actually did. The argument,—sophistical it must be of course,—seems all in his favor. But who practically and really believes that he is not morally free ? We feel that we are free, that is, we perceive it directly, that is consciousness affirms it. Experience also testifies to it, and conscience confirms our belief of it, and to doubt the truth of the testimony of consciousness, supported as it thus is, would be like disbelieving in the existence of matter,—as some philosophers have pretended that they did,—because they could not reason themselves, unaided

by their senses, into a belief in its existence. The argument of the objector, if relied upon exclusively, would go to overthrow our faith in our personal identity. We cannot prove that to another individual, nor indeed, by argument to ourselves. We are certain of our identity, because we are conscious of it, that is, conscious of being the same persons memory tells us we always have been. So are we certain of our moral freedom, because we feel ourselves to be free.

The position we have taken is confirmed by a consideration of the relative rank of our faculties as regards the Order in which they are usually developed.

In our early infancy, we are creatures of sense. The first impulse of improvement awakens the understanding. Then the moral powers, the self-determining will, conscience and the moral sentiments, are quickened into life. Lastly, our religious capacities begin to be unfolded,—certainly they are unfolded with more energy than before,—and they thenceforth ripen and advance without limitation. Now is it not probable that the exercises and tendencies of this crowning portion of our nature would point to realities and truths? Is it credible that the senses, that part of our nature which is perfect in infancy, are more correct judges of the internal things of our being than the

soul, that faculty which is educated only in the highest moral seminaries, and amid multiplied facilities, and through years of experience ?

We have now reached the great question between the infidel and the Christian. The latter maintains that every human being, in a sound mental and moral condition, has an internal persuasion or intuitive perception of the truth of Religion. He contends that we have all the certainty of the truths of Christianity, that we have of our personal identity,—that if consciousness deceives us in the one case, and there is, after all, no God in Heaven, no immortal spirit in man, and no existence beyond the grave, then it may also deceive us in the other case, and we may be different individuals from what we were yesterday. The infidel contends that the senses are our only trustworthy guides ; that they are qualified to judge, not only of outward objects, but of inward, invisible transactions ; and that Religion, lying beyond their province, and depending on consciousness for the proof of its truth, is all a delusion. Which is right, and which in error ?

If man was designed for improvement, if his inward powers were not given him to be stifled and destroyed, then it must be that the conclusions to which he arrives and the opinions he adopts when his faculties are most perfectly de-

veloped, are most likely to be correct. But man is a social being, and society, when elevated as it may be, and tends naturally by civilization to become, is a school for improvement. In such a state the progress of the mind cannot be prevented; and the advancement of the race follows. At least, the individual must improve. The more we learn, especially the more we gain of that divine wisdom, a knowledge of ourselves, the more do we feel the want of some power to elevate and expand our inmost nature. We look around, above, and within, ourselves. The soul pleads for a revelation from some being higher than itself. It receives the "elder revelation;" we are evermore conscious that provision has been made for the soul, that it can be found in Religion, and in that alone.

The view we have now presented requires, I admit, a just appreciation of our spiritual nature. It is easy to contemplate man in such a light that the reasoning I have offered shall appear unsatisfactory and delusive. A narrow-minded person, one whose inward powers are but imperfectly developed, one living always in the region of sense, and drawing arguments chiefly from his own condition, will look with distrust on the evidence of consciousness. We may even so far do violence to our highest aspirations and purest sentiments,

as to persuade ourselves that Christianity is a fable. Some, it is said, have reasoned themselves into Atheism, and hence, it has been objected, that man can have no intuitive perception of, or conscious belief in, any spiritual truths. But so have some argued themselves into a denial of the existence of the outward world. Yet shall we hence contend that man does not intuitively believe in the testimony of his senses? Our nature is susceptible of fearful perversions; but these perversions do not disprove its original integrity.

The Scriptures affirm that "The Spirit beareth witness with our spirits that we are the children of God." By this I understand that there is that in the human soul which proves the truth of Religion. This affirmation is confirmed by experience. As we unfold our inward nature, we become conscious of a connection with the Infinite Spirit, and of the possession of powers and faculties which this life cannot fully develop. We are told by an inward voice that Religion is true. We enjoy intimations of this kind which multiply continually with our progress in purity and virtue. The more conscience is educated, the greater light it receives, and the more implicitly we obey its mandates, the higher our spiritual nature rises in power; and the more steady is

its control over the animal nature ; and the deeper is our conviction that

“No fancied joy beyond the sky,
No fair delusion is revealed ;”

But that, in the witness of our own spirits,

“’Tis God that speaks who cannot lie ;”

If an angel from Heaven proclaimed in our ear the reality of Religion, we should hardly feel more secure than we do, in this state of mind, of the truth and the hopes and prospects of Christianity.

From the nature of the case, indeed, if the testimony of consciousness is of any value, if it be not every where and on all subjects a gross delusion, then it must occupy the chief place among the foundations of our faith. But we have seen that it is trustworthy as the basis of evidence on other subjects. Then is it on that of Religion ; it affords ground for all the certainty, that we need or can ask in the concerns of the soul.

CHAPTER III.

THE OUTER AND THE INNER MAN.

WE have ascertained the superiority of the Soul by an examination of Consciousness. We arrive at the same result by investigating the comparative value attached to its distinct departments by the Author of our nature. For which doth God most care, the Outward, or the Inward, man?

I observe first that Creation pronounces its decision on our inquiry in a clear and emphatic voice. I contemplate the outward man. I see in it nothing that indicates its being designed for an End. It bears no traces of durability. It is a collection of means, of instruments, of mechanical forces, all pointing to an object beyond themselves, and all showing the transitoriness of their existence. What is this body? A servant, working for, and entirely dependent upon, another. It falls within the rank of the outward creation, and partakes in its fortunes. Frailty, decay, and death, are its inevitable lot. The particles, which constitute our physical frame, change daily. A strange event at length passes over us, and they

are decomposed and resolved into another form, and thence onward into ever-varying and ever new forms. If the permanent existence and well-being of the outward man be in reality our chief interest, what shall we say of this seeming disregard of it, as an end, by its Maker ?

But I feel no such difficulty in relation to the Inward man. That is evidently an end. It was made to subject every thing outward to itself. Not only does it master the body which enshrines it, but it reigns over all that is visible, and rules all matter. No profound philosophy is required to perceive that it was to promote the interests of mind, soul, spirit, that God built these shining worlds around us. The material universe is a concourse of agencies and operations, all ministering to "the Hidden Man." For this suns glow in their spheres and stars radiate through immensity. All nature commissions her powers to awaken the intellect, and to develop the heart with its mighty affections. They are the priests of God, that wait round his throne for these holy errands: For a spiritual purpose, for the inculcation of Truth, the culture of Goodness, and the growth of the sentiment of Beauty, all things are, and were created. We are surrounded by emblems and symbols. The visible suggests the invisible; the decaying, the permanent; the

relative, the absolute; the imperfect, the perfect; the finite, the infinite. Flower, forest, sky, ocean, what are they but ministers to the spiritual world, speaking continually of the great Father of spirits, and of the Inward man, revealing to itself its depths, and foreshadowing its glorious destiny.

Mark, also, the ongoings of Providence and the course of events. What is the testimony of History relative to God's care for the outward man? We imagine ourselves, in these latter days, living amid unprecedented physical comforts. And so, as respects not a few of the race, we are. Yet the ruins of Pompeii afford proof that a state of society existed eighteen hundred years ago, scarcely inferior in outward luxuries to our own. But did the Inner man then receive the same care? Was the ancient Roman as enlightened, as pure in morals, and as correct in his Religious Faith, as the most improved of the race are in this nineteenth century? None can contend thus. We might go back even to the ancient glory of Egypt, to a period 1500 years before Christ, and find in the pyramids and relics of that age proofs that the arts were then carried to a rare perfection. Yet in the midst of their outward splendor the Egyptians were debased by a gross idolatry. So do we find that, in these latter days, the outer man has received few advantages beyond those of

former centuries, while the inner man has been developed and greatly advanced.

To contract our survey to individual experience. Who has not seen the outward man tried, depressed, if not borne down, by the course of events. Sickness and pain, if the body be indeed of superior concern in the eye of Providence, are an inexplicable enigma. How dark, in this view, are the bereavements of our lot. I have seen the little child, one day blooming in health and beauty, the next arrested by disease, and a few suns only set, when the countenance was changed and the sentence of mortality executed upon it. "Can it be," I asked myself, "that this marble form is God's best gift to man? Can he have so stricken the afflicted parents of this child for naught?" When I turn to the Inward man, the problem is solved. God would save the Soul, by destroying its fair frame work; or he would, by this event, touch the hearts of the kindred and lift them to himself. Thus are sickness and death transformed from messengers of wrath into angels of love. The outward man perishes; but the inward man is renewed. Life, and immortal vigor and joy, thus spring up even from the dust.

The view just taken presents a key to the various forms of Religion that have appeared on the earth. The outward man is perfect. It was so

in Adam. No essential improvement can take place in its original features, nor in its development and character. But not so with the Inner man? I ask why these erroneous modes of worship, the Egyptian, Grecian, Hindoo, Mexican, and others? Why the imperfection even of that revelation made to God's "chosen people?" The outward man stands dumb at the question. The soul alone can answer it. The race, like the individual, was created for an Inward purpose, for a spiritual end, in one word, for interminable improvement. Hence there must needs be a separate culture adapted to the capacity of each nation and each age. There must be means and incentives for progress. The Heathen was and is a moral infant. The Jew arrived only at a spiritual youth. "The Law was a schoolmaster to bring men to Christ," that is, "to the stature of perfect men."

The supremacy of the spirit is seen by examination of the springs of human Happiness. Wherein does this consist? In outward endowments, gifts, or possessions? Action would answer, yea. For the world live and toil, as though man's good consisted in the abundance of this life's treasures. If Rachel can only be obtained, they serve on cheerfully the seven years, aye many times seven, and "for the love they bear

toward her, it seems but a few days." Aggrandizement is their watchword. But all this fever and show avail little. To be happy we must have other riches than silver and gold, or lands and stocks. We must have heart-treasures. We must be honored, not in the cabinet or the saloon, but in the retreats of Conscience. We thirst for an outward sway, to vanquish our sectarian, or political, or commercial, opponents. But wisdom daily announces in our ear that the worst foes of our peace are those *within* us, and that to triumph there is to triumph everywhere, is to be truly happy.

And what is it that constitutes our Grievs? Not the loss of property, honors, or luxuries. I look on my neighbor. All seems against him. Dark and troubled waters roll over him. I look still deeper. His heart is right before God; the inward man has lost nothing, but rather gained. Therefore does the stream of his being flow over golden sands. We misjudge others' sorrows. "Known to the heart only is its own bitterness." Real grief is quiet and silent; it can never be expressed by the lips. The countenance is altered; its morning hues flee away; mournful music comes in the voice; but no words can tell the inward agony. In trouble the outward world dwindles to a point; and we then learn that

the sternness of our lot is in "the Hidden man of the heart."

It is not then in the body to say to us, "Come now, and be at peace with thyself; be content, and enjoy to the uttermost all within thy reach." No, we are all, in our soberest moments, when we are ourselves, and not intoxicated with animal passions and pleasures, perfectly convinced that happiness depends on no outward object whatever, that it consists in the state of the mind. We should never advise a friend, were our friendship enlightened as well as sincere, to eat, drink and be merry, and to be anxious for nothing farther. We should say to him, on the contrary, "Control your animal nature and keep in check every passion; develope your affections, and form the highest attainable character."

But an interest far greater than mere happiness is still to be advanced in proof of the supremacy of our inward nature. I refer to man's true Life. What constitutes this? Where does it originate? How is it sustained?

Life is an acquisition which all seek. Who does not desire it and cling to it, as the greatest conceivable boon. The highest Hebrew blessing was "length of days." But uninterrupted life comes not of the body. Silver and gold cannot purchase it. All that a man hath he may give for his temporal

life, but it cannot be redeemed from the grave. Earthly names and titles entail not this estate. It is connected with no outward possession whatever. The only ever-during life springs from the soul. It is essentially interior, unseen, known only to individual consciousness. It is not until "wisdom is put into our Inward parts and understanding in the Heart," that we truly and permanently live. One may present to a spectator the appearances of perfect health, the radiant eye, the roseate cheek, and the well developed form; the lungs may play vigorously, and still the man may be, in every noble and true sense, *dead*. He may have almost no hold on an eternal being. His spirit may be wrapt in a sleep prophetic of death. But if his soul is quickened into life, then he indeed lives.

How is the life, thus originated, afterward sustained? By the bribes of wealth, or the appurtenances of power? or by outward appliances, or the comforts and luxuries and emoluments that fortune can procure? by the bread which feedeth the body? No, it is fed with hidden manna. As the heart is seated in the midst of the physical frame, and that lives and thrives by its impulses alone, so doth the inward man prosper only when the spiritual heart is sending its warm currents from a latent centre throughout the entire moral man. Then only does he lead an everlasting life.

CHAPTER IV.

THE SCRIPTURE ESTIMATE OF THE SOUL AND THE BODY.

WHEN we seek the testimony of the Bible on our subject, we are struck with the fact that, while it purports to treat of man's Chief Good, it proceeds on the assumption that this consists in inward, spiritual things. It does not stop to argue with the materialist, but assumes that his doctrine is untrue. It no where represents man as consisting only of a body. He is called by it, on the contrary, a "LIVING SOUL." He is addressed as a spirit. All that is essential, vital, and enduring, in his nature, is set forth as spiritual. The body is represented as merely a possession; as a tenement leased to us for a term of years; as an instrument, to be used for a specific purpose and then laid entirely aside.

Even the Old Covenant recognizes the supremacy of the "Hidden man." To this the Law was addressed. It was in view of its infinite superiority that the Psalmist said, "Thou desirest truth in the Inward parts. If I regard iniquity in my Heart, the Lord will not hear me." Thus spake

Jehovah through the prophets, "I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it on their hearts." He was not a sincere Jew, who was one outwardly alone. "Circumcision," said Paul, "is of the heart, in the spirit, not in the letter."

But preëminently did Jesus Christ exalt the soul. It was not to deliver the body from prisons, or pains, or even from death, that he entered on his ministry. So far from this, he often took occasion to disparage the body. "Fear not," said he, "them that kill the body, and after that have no more that they can do." He looked directly at the Soul; and toward that he sped his way. His kingdom was within. He saw the naked human heart; and if a plague spot was upon it, no embellishments of wealth, no trappings of royalty, could conceal it from his eye. The plaudits of a world could not drown in his ear the tones from the heart of the guilty Pharisee. The outside of the cup might be made never so clean; his stern demand was, "cleanse first that which is *within*." It was not bodily defilements, the eating with unwashen hands, which most polluted the man; it was the unclean heart, out of which proceed "evil thoughts, adulteries, murders and blasphemies."

So also with the pure. The beggar, whose hidden man was right before God, the Syrophenician woman, the Samaritan, the falsely judged

sinner, he whose secret motives and aspirations were sanctified, these were the individuals whom Jesus clasped to his bosom. Hence was it, that where others cried, "Why this waste," he pronounced an immortal blessing; and where the formalist and the bigot would cast stones at the offender, he spread the shield of love; for in the heart he read tokens of a godly sorrow; he saw, what no one else could, omens of an abiding reformation.

We are told that if we have been led into divine truth, it must have been through the light of the Spirit, bearing witness with our own spirits. The materialist cannot perceive the full force of the argument for Christianity. He, who believes that the senses alone can be trusted, must be confounded by the language of its record, "The spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God. He that is spiritual judgeth all things. The things of the spirit of God are spiritually discerned." What authority is here given to the Soul. "Take heed," says Christ, "that the light that is *within* you be not darkness. Why even of yourselves judge ye not what is right?" Christ is said by an Apostle to be actually "formed within us." How can this be, unless the Soul is the Man, the arbiter of our destiny, the beginning and the end of our hopes?

So fundamental is this principle, that we are told one cannot believe in the glorious depths of the gospel except through his spiritual capacities, "the hidden man of the heart." No man has a living, real faith in Christ, unless he have touched and quickened him within. The great evidence of Christianity is its inward one, "the witness of the spirit." Until that is received, the New Testament is a dead letter. When the inward man is awakened, then light is poured on the mind; the volume is seen to be from God; it becomes radiant with a spiritual beam, and it imparts life and peace.

If life be represented as thus concentrated in the Soul, so also is death said to depend on the internal man. The spirit is withdrawn from the body, and that becomes straightway inert and motionless. An Apostle compares the body to a "tabernacle," shewing thereby its transitory nature. "Without the spirit," we are told that "the body is dead." While therefore the body is with the spirit, it has nothing whereof it may boast. No man may, in any sense, "glory in the flesh." In all things the preëminence must be given to the Spirit.

The language of Christ on this subject is conclusive. "If a man keep my sayings, HE SHALL NEVER TASTE DEATH." This is not true if the

flesh is a portion of the man himself. For that does die, and under all circumstances, except that of an actual miracle, it always will die. Piety does not save a man's body from death. But his soul, that is himself, it does save. Hence the language of Jesus was true.

Nor is this the only sense in which death is shewn to be impotent. When we pass from this to a future state, it is a mere passage, a transition, or as we often express it, a "removal" from this world to another, a "departure" from things seen to the invisible state. Death is not the extinction of man's life, for man, that is the soul, cannot die. The living, conscious agent, is by its very nature indestructible. The spirit not so much has, as *is*, life. So true is this, that while the outward man is decaying, the inward man, the ever-during principle, may be actually becoming more vigorous than it was in the body's best health. When we stand by the bed of a departing immortal, and listen to the strong language of Christian faith, when, as sometimes occurs, we hear the sick one speak of approaching death as but a journey he is about taking to a far country, we then feel the sublime truth of the words "man is a living soul;" matter sinks into insignificance, and the spirit triumphs in its supremacy.

But though Scripture thus enthrones the soul,

it gives us no authority to undervalue, still less, to vilify, the body. That is represented as the workmanship of God, "fearfully and wonderfully made." Starting from the interior man, as the first goal of faith, we may indeed derive important aid to our religious belief from a view of the mechanism of the body. Its marvellous structure shows strikingly the hand of its Author. Perhaps no argument in proof of his wisdom and goodness, drawn from beyond the soul itself, is more conclusive than that taken from the anatomy, and the various functions and adaptations, of this physical frame.

An old English writer has well said of this study, that "whoever considers it will never be an Atheist, the frame of man's body and coherence of its parts being so strange and paradoxical, that," he continues, "I hold it to be the greatest miracle of nature; though when all is done, I do not find," he adds, "she hath made it so much as proof against one disease, lest she should be thought to have made it no less than a prison to the Soul."

The question arises, why is the body so admirably illustrative of God? The answer is, because it is so perfectly adapted to its great end, which is to minister to the Spirit within it. The senses are the great inlets of a knowledge of the external world. They are the channels which

convey to the mind many of its materials for thought. They are also the instruments, by which the mind communicates itself, and operates on all that surrounds it. The living voice, that organ of eloquence, one of the chief moving powers of the intellectual and moral world, is a result of the functions of the body. The lightning of the countenance flashes from unseen depths ; the thunders of oratory impress us because they issue from a laboratory which the outward man has not entered. No inspiring sentiment that comes from the press, had ever seen the light, but for the skill of the hand that penned it. Yet how immeasurably more noble is the Soul that breathes in true eloquence than the voice that gives it utterance. How much more glorious is the Mind that originated and pervades every wise and every kindling sentence we read, than the hand which penned it. Allow all we ought,—and it is certainly much,—to this portion of matter, still the body dwindles to a point, in comparison with the vital principle which inhabits it. Thus do both Reason and Scripture give the supremacy to the spirit.

CHAPTER V.

THE PROPER KIND OF EVIDENCE FOR RELIGION.

We are liable to be misled in regard to the nature of the evidence on which Religion should rest. Thomas would not believe that his Master had been raised from the dead, until he had actually seen him. There are those at this day, who refuse assent to the truth of Christianity, on this same ground. They demand more proof of it. There is nothing, they say, which informs their senses of a spiritual God, or a future life. They require not only as strong evidence of the existence of the soul, as they have of that of the body, but the same kind of evidence. They say of the Omnipresent One, "Behold, I go forward, but he is not there ; and backward, but I cannot perceive him. Therefore he does not exist. The idea of a God is all a delusion."

But these persons should know that moral subjects do not, by their very nature, admit of such evidence. Allow that there is a God, who is a pure spirit, and of course immaterial, that is, such a Being as the believer contends that God actually

is ; it is impossible, from his very nature, that we should behold him with the eye of the body. Not only must we "worship the Father," of necessity, "in spirit and in truth," but must behold him and know that he exists, in spirit alone.

There is some appropriate instrument for discerning every object in existence. But all objects cannot be seen by the same instrument. The inward world cannot be surveyed by faculties adapted to the outward world. You say, for example, that such an one is remarkable for his justice, wisdom, or benevolence. But can you see those qualities with the eye of sense ? What proof have we that there is any virtue in existence ? We cannot hear or touch a moral trait. Not one of our senses teaches us that this individual is honest, pure, and kind, and that individual corrupt, and selfish. We may have seen certain actions, it is true, which indicate those qualities ; but the qualities themselves, that which gives birth to the actions, we have not seen. They are revealed to us by our moral nature alone, by something wholly invisible. Just as reasonably, therefore, may one affirm that he will not believe in justice, mercy, and love, that they are mere words, all a delusion, because he cannot see them with his bodily eye, as to say, that he will not believe in the truths of Religion, because they do not address his senses.

Many feel doubts in regard to a Future State. They require more proof of its existence. Nothing they see, or hear, or touch, tells them, they say, of any spiritual world. But are they reasonable in disbelieving its existence for this cause alone? Suppose it true that there is such a state, as the Christian maintains. How ought it to be proved to mankind? Do you say, they must see it with the natural eye, must behold it as they do these material worlds, the sun and moon, and the earth they inhabit? From the very nature of the case, it cannot be discerned in this manner. It is a world of spirits. But we have just seen that the qualities of a spirit, love, joy, goodness, are imperceptible to the senses. Until therefore you can see or touch these virtues, you cannot see a spirit, nor, of course, the world of spirits. No one of the senses can take cognizance of a state, like the future life of man, consisting, as it does, in the existence of disembodied souls.

This reasoning applies to all attempts to prove the realities of religion. They are not to be demonstrated by arguments addressed to the senses alone, or primarily. We may not proceed as we do to prove the realities of the material world. The properties and laws of this are all unlike those of the spiritual world. These are of an invisible and a moral nature. All evidence pertaining to

them must, therefore, be of a moral description. If we had an hundred senses, instead of these five, they could all do nothing to show us directly the Spirit of God, or the existence of a world of spirits.

Many persons have rejected Christianity because unacquainted with the great Law on which its truth rests. They took up the inquiry in regard to it, as they would some problem in mathematics. They called for demonstration. "The gospel," said they, "must be proved true to a mathematical certainty. So long as there is one objection against it, or one difficulty in the way of receiving it, we will determinately reject it. If there be the least room for doubt concerning it, we will remain unbelievers." Such men must forever doubt, because they go to the wrong sources for proof.

The value and importance of the evidence drawn from the senses has been, in this connection, exceedingly overrated. It has been made to occupy the highest place, in matters of belief. But it is easy to show that we often believe truths not only unsupported by our senses, but actually contradicted by them. You tell me that the senses are always safe judges; that we cannot be deceived about any thing we see, or hear, or touch; that you only want these witnesses to make you a believer in Religion. But walk out with me on

a fine autumn evening. See yonder moon just peering above the horizon. It strikes your eye as a very large object. But watch its progress. As it ascends higher and still higher, it appears constantly to diminish. But do you really believe that the moon by rising does diminish? No, astronomers inform us that this apparent change is an optical illusion, that our eyes deceive us in regard to that planet, for it has an uniform, unchangeable size. You believe them; you receive for truth the testimony of man, a moral thing, in direct opposition to that of your senses. Why then claim that the senses are infallible in the concerns of Religion? Why maintain that their evidence would be to you of more value than any of an invisible nature can be?

Take again, the question of personal identity. You affirm yourself to be the same individual you were seven years ago. But how is this proved? It is a well known fact that the human body is passing through constant changes, that it undergoes a daily supply and waste, so that once in seven years, it is said, every particle in the body passes away and is supplied by a new material. We are in consequence of this change, at the close of every seven years, so far as the body is concerned, new beings. Our own senses testify to this truth, in the constant renewal of many portions of the body, the

hair and the nails, for example. As the child grows up to manhood, the substance of which his frame is composed changes and increases, two, four, ten, fold. So do we lose our flesh, or gain flesh, and thus become, physically speaking, new beings. The senses bear witness to this fact. Yet, in direct opposition to the evidence of sense, we believe ourselves to be identically the same persons we were ten or twenty years since. The evidence of our mind, or spirit, an invisible thing, is trusted more than our senses. Is it consistent then, in the case of Religion, to exalt the senses above the Soul? Shall its testimony be worth less to us than that of the eye and the ear? Are we not rather bound to believe the truths of Religion, although unsupported by, or even opposed, in some respects to, the evidence of sense?

"But," says the skeptic, "if God would give man a revelation, why did he not furnish such proofs of its truth that no one could disbelieve it? Why did he not write its great doctrines and precepts on the skies, where all nations could read them?" With equal propriety it may be asked "Why has he not made *everything* certain to the senses? Why are there any moral truths? Why such a thing as moral evidence, evidence addressed to the inward man?"

There is in some minds an impression that it

is unnatural to believe in the truths of Religion, that only the weak, the ignorant and superstitious, have much faith in it. This kind of suspicion and distrust come often from imperfect views in regard to the laws of nature. It is thought that an intelligent person will only believe heartily what is demonstrated by some law of the material world; and that Christianity has very little support from what is casually called "Nature."

Some are involved in doubts from a disregard of the distinct nature of matter and spirit. Men occupied in the physical sciences have been known, on this account, to question the truths of Religion. La Place resolved every thing that takes place into what he termed "The irresistible operation of the essential properties of matter." He was led into this error by observing the uniformity of nature. But why is nature uniform? Can we not perceive reasons for it? And are they such as to shake our faith in the independence of spirit?

The material creation is governed by uniform laws because these are essential to the perfection of matter. Did they continually vary there would be constant confusion, collision, and consequent destruction, in the province of matter. This consequence is obvious, and it would manifestly defeat the very object of the creation of matter.

Again, nature must be uniform or man could not penetrate her secrets, or employ her forces. Physical science advances only as we become acquainted with the unvarying operations of matter. One man builds on the deductions of another only through his confidence in the uniformity of nature. On this principle the arts too depend ; and, had it not been established, the world must have been always in the ignorance and destitution of barbarism. Indeed the mind itself owes the successful exercise of its free and rational powers to the invariable processes of nature. Whatever knowledge or mental power we owe to sensation,—and on no theory of mind is this a small amount,—must be traced to our confidence in the uniformity of all physical causes. Law is the basis of liberty, of intellectual, no less than civil, liberty. Without it confusion and desolation ensue, and certainty and effort are at an end. Law then is the twin-sister of order, so that the uses of nature's uniformity are apparent.

But does this reasoning apply to Spiritual things? Are they too bound by a stern necessity, and an iron uniformity? Consciousness replies no, we feel that we are “a law unto ourselves;” that mind or spirit is free from the rigid dominion of matter, made to take direct cognizance of its own acts, and never to be in bondage to sense. It is a disregard of this condition of mind that plunges

many into a sensual philosophy. It is this which makes most of the unbelievers and skeptics who exist.

Some plant themselves on the determination to believe nothing, in the concerns of Religion, which they cannot perfectly understand. They make the Intellect the sole test of religious truth, and thus deny the authority of Consciousness. Not content with a knowledge of the fact that spiritual things do exist, they demand an explanation of the mode and manner of their existence, as a condition of their faith in them. "I cannot understand," said a fellow-traveller to me, "what God is, nor what a soul is, and I make it a rule to believe in nothing until I understand it." "Sir," said I in reply to him, "do you believe," pointing to a rose, "that that plant is growing?" "Yes," was his answer, "because I see it." "But can you tell me *how* it grows? Do you understand it?" "I am not obliged to do that," said he; "all I need is to see it grow and know the fact." "Neither," I replied, "are you obliged to understand *how* God exists; all you need is to know the fact that he does exist, and of that you can see in this very plant one evidence. A still stronger one you may see in your own soul. And the fact that you have, or rather are, a soul is certain, for though you cannot tell how or why you think, and feel, you know the

fact that you do think and do feel. The operations of your mind or soul are just as certain as the operations of matter, in the growth of the plant."

Men speak of Religion as contradicting "the laws of Nature." But does not this statement, in the first place, assume too much, viz., that we are entirely acquainted with all nature? How little do we,—how little do the wisest know,—of that Nature, whose province they would so accurately define. Who can say that, so far from transgressing her laws, it might not, on the contrary, constitute one of those laws, that when the world became as corrupt as it was at the appearance of Jesus Christ, then must a Savior have come and performed "wonderful works" no less inward than outward, which should have power to regenerate and save it? We that are of yesterday, and "know nothing," as we ought, are surely incapable of sitting in judgment on the laws of Nature, and saying what is, and what is not, within the compass of those laws. It is presumptuous in us, ignorant as we are, to set bounds to the power of nature.

We should consider also that Nature is not entirely an outward thing. There is an Inner man, and that has its laws; and we are as much bound to consult these laws, when we examine "the Laws of Nature," as we are those of the outer world.

Now it is a law of the inner world that man should constantly improve; that his mind should accumulate knowledge, and his moral and spiritual character make constant advancement. If you deny this, you deny man the very quality which most distinguishes him from the brutes. They are stationary, making no progress beyond past generations, nor beyond their own attainments, when they have reached a certain point of growth.

But if man, to be a man, must continually improve, how is it to be done? I answer, all experience shows that *Religion alone* can fully develop his faculties; that only can call forth all the power within him. The belief in a God, and in a future life, and in the great practical truths of Christianity, has given an impulse to human improvement, such as it has never otherwise received. This being true, if we reject the Christian religion, it is we, and not believers, who do violence to the "laws of Nature." We take away from man the only means he has of becoming what he was evidently intended to become. He has then powers created only to be dwarfed; aspirations given him only to mock his spirit; a tendency, involving the good of his whole being, which he is yet destined, through life, to struggle against and resist. Can this be a "law of Nature?" No, it

is as natural to believe in the great principles of Religion, as it is to believe in human progress, in the events of History; in the existence of any place or object we have never seen; nay in any thing not mathematically certain.

Another law of nature is to avoid Extremes. If I interpret this law aright, we are as much bound by it to shun the excess of doubt, as the excess of credulity.

On the whole material universe we see the decree written, "Hitherto shalt thou come, but no farther." The inanimate creation is closed in by it on every side. Systems and worlds, as they pass and repass each other, in their journies through space, have each its distinct orbit. The same Power that propels them, restrains also their movements, so that no one of them comes in collision with, or infringes on, the path of, another. This law prevails over the animal creation. They have each their own habits, and food, and province. In no instance has one species the power of extermination over any other. Nor does one faculty of their nature conflict with the rest. Is it then probable that man would be so constituted as that, in his dominion of the world within him, one principle of his nature might be permitted to overshadow, still more to bring into such subjection as to neutralize the effect of, all

other parts, or any other part, of his nature ? The moment we allow any one opinion to master and enslave us, we do what no portion of the Material Universe, or of the inferior creation, can do, without disturbing the order of everything it may affect. Were the bands of Orion to be loosed, or the Power that guides Arcturus to be withdrawn from it, we can see that confusion and desolation must follow. Is not the same danger inseparable from the removal of all restraints upon the inner world, the mind, heart, Soul ?

“It is natural,” you may say, “that we should doubt in regard to the truth of Religion.” But is doubt so commanding a principle of our being that nothing may reasonably overcome it ? No, so far is this from being true, that he who affects to doubt everything, does in reality believe something. He believes too the astounding proposition that *nothing ought to be believed !* That extreme of credulity which believes all reported miracles, and all the legends of Popish wonder-works and of modern witchcraft, is not a particle more unnatural and irrational than that universal skepticism, which regards no truth of religion as worthy of belief because it is a concern of the mind or spirit. By the very constitution of our nature we must believe something on the subject of Religion ; we cannot, if we would, refuse it all

credence. If we ought resolutely to deny the fables of superstition, so ought we to accept the conclusions of a rational faith. The extreme of doubt is as contrary to the "laws of nature" as the extreme of belief. It is hence full as natural to believe in some cases, as it is to doubt in others.

CHAPTER VI.

THE FAITH OF THE AFFECTIONS.

I HAVE, in the last Chapter, spoken of Faith as an intellectual process. I now proceed to remark that Faith in Religion does not consist in a mere assent of the mind to its truth. Many writers on the evidences of Christianity seem to imagine that they need only convince the understanding, to make men believers. They employ therefore ingenious reasoning; they state and defend many formal propositions; they meet with great acuteness the logic of the infidel, and then think their task is accomplished. Their labor is a good one in its place, and, when held at its true estimate, we should accept it with all thankfulness.

But something more is still needed; for, before believing in Religion, one must understand, not simply its outworks, but its internal nature. We can never believe in a thing of which we have no just idea. In what then does Christianity consist? In a supreme love to God and in loving our neighbor as ourselves. But with what faculties do we love our Creator? With the intellect alone?

Scripture says, "Thou shalt love the Lord, thy God, with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind." The heart and the soul are then concerned in all true Religion. There are sentiments, affections, feelings, no less than thoughts, appealed to by Christianity. He therefore who has devoted no affection or feeling to the subject cannot comprehend the whole evidence for Religion. He may understand many parts of it, or rather many things about it, as for example, its forms, and institutions, and outward effects. But these are only the appendages and the consequences of Christianity, and not Christianity itself. That consists essentially in sentiments, in love to God and love to man,—in qualities as distinct from the naked intellect as that is from flesh and blood. It hence follows that no man can be a full believer until he has experienced the power of Religion on his "heart and soul."

Indeed one cannot believe anything on a subject of which he has never had the least experience. A man born deaf and dumb cannot believe in music. He can form no correct opinion of any sound whatever, for he has no materials on which to build such an opinion. Or, to take a case more analogous to our topic, suppose a man radically and totally selfish. Can he understand the nature of benevolence? Can he conceive of, and believe

that there really exist, men who perform disinterested deeds ? Has such an one any idea of that love which lives in and for another ? Certainly not ; love only can comprehend love. We are driven then to the conclusion that as Religion consists essentially in spiritual and social affections, he only can be a true believer in it, who has experienced those affections. Before one can have a full faith in the reality of the spiritual life, he must at least have commenced leading that life.

There is an objection to this view, I know. It is asked "How can men ever become converts to Christ, on this ground ? If they must be regenerated before they can believe in him, and that too by the very Religion they do not yet believe in, they must, it would seem, remain forever in unbelief." But this difficulty is more apparent than real. How did we come to believe in the existence of gratitude, or any other virtue ? We simply yielded to the promptings of our nature ; we did not resist, but cherished, our first grateful emotions. We were willing to obey the earliest impulse we felt toward the virtue in question.

Such must be the state of the heart in reference to Religion. We must open our ear to the teachings of God. When his Spirit is whispering to our souls, and our hearts are touched, we must listen as for our lives. There are events and

occasions every day of our lives, in which Providence is addressing our inward nature. It is not in the loud voice alone, by mortal sickness, or by overwhelming bereavements, that he speaks to us. No, the goodness of God, bright, inexhaustible, as it is, should melt us into love. It is our unworthy prejudices and our guilty thoughtlessness, it is our devotion to the cares that distract, and the pleasures that pollute, our spirits, it is these, and not the silence or the neglect of God, that render our affections torpid. If we would believe, we must feel. If we would feel, we must place ourselves in the way of feeling, amid those influences that serve to quicken the soul into life.

Look again at the comparative rank of the intellect, and the affections. We were designed, beyond question, for intellectual improvement. But reason joins with the written Word of God in showing that there is a duty still higher than that of cultivating the intellect. Christianity teaches that the kingdom of Heaven consists in "righteousness, peace, and joy in a Holy Spirit;" in other words, that the destiny of man is, moral and spiritual attainments. We see here abundant reason for placing confidence in the affections as a part of the evidence for Religion.

Let us look next at the testimony of man's Moral Constitution. Our Savior, in speaking of

little children, affirmed, "Of such is the kingdom of Heaven." But what faculties are first awakened in the child? The affections, all know, are called forth and matured much earlier than the intellect. The understanding has yet scarcely dawned on its being. How intensely does the infant love and cling to its mother? Soon the father is loved; his departure gives a pang to the little heart, and his return is greeted with rapture. Nor is this attachment as yet discriminating or intelligent. The stranger, if most in company with the child and his greatest benefactor, comes easily to supplant in his bosom the very mother herself. In advancing years, when the boy is led to choose his companions and favorites, while his whole soul is poured out upon them, how often is his judgment either not at all consulted, or quite too feeble to sway his conduct.

If we pass on to man in his maturity, our conclusion must be that it is emotion, sentiment, feeling, which determines and constitutes his character. Reason seems then but an instrument, designed for an ulterior use. Its exercises are not the chief concern of life. They are only a guide to the operations of the moral nature. Hope, fear, joy, sorrow, trust, gratitude, love, these are the springs of human conduct; and reason comes in only to regulate, move, or restrain, them. He

who gives himself exclusively to mental culture. who loves no one and cares for no one, is always in an unnatural condition. In the matter of Religion he is either a cold-hearted skeptic, or compulsively devout. So far as his fellows are concerned, he is either a recluse, or a sickly sentimentalist. The only well developed, harmonious, and truly valuable, character, is that in which the affections are active, and are directed by principle, being neither frigidly stinted, nor enthusiastically lawless, in their movements.

Man, again, is essentially an active being. In idleness he is both weak and miserable. But where, except in the exercise of his affections and his moral nature in general, can he find full scope for effort? Imagination cannot be indulged without limitation. Unless ruled with an iron energy of purpose, it may waste itself, and bring woe on the sufferer, by its vagaries. There are bounds which Taste cannot pass nor Thought overleap. Our knowledge is rigidly confined within definite limits. What do we know of the beginnings of the past, of the origin of God, or of the limitations of time and space? What of the nature of things? We cannot tell how the humblest plant grows, nor how it came into being. What know we of this mighty Universe around us? A few points that roll far up in the skies we nightly observe.

But what are they? Are they occupied by beings like ourselves? Are they occupied at all? And beyond them, onward and still onward, what fills the vast depths of space? Where are its boundaries? Has it indeed any boundaries at all? And yet finite cannot be infinite. Eternity also, the illimitable future, what do we know of that?

Thus are we mocked and sent home from the voyages of Thought, the undiscoverable still eluding our grasp. Yet man has unlimited capacities, and they must have,—at least the controlling ones must have,—some commensurate object to fill and satisfy them. God forms none of his creatures, not the lowest even of the sensitive races, with capacities that are never developed. He always establishes a correspondence between powers and their objects and pursuits. Seeing then that the Intellect is thus imprisoned, so often frustrated in its aims, and so painfully conscious of its failures and its inability to attain what it seeks, where shall we turn for the boon we desire? The answer in part certainly is, we must rely on the Affections. In these, in adoration, love, sympathy, we find scope for exercises boundless as our desires. The knowledge of God is too great for our comprehension. When we think of him, we are bewildered and lost. His power, almightiness, the intellect cannot fathom it; Imagination

is overwhelmed by it. But his Love, all-embracing, eternal though it be, this we can comprehend and as it were share. We can at least apprehend it; when we commune with Infinite benevolence we feel ourselves at home. "He that dwelleth in love, dwelleth in God, and God in him." Religion, consisting in love, is thus its own voucher.

Another argument which shows the necessity of experiencing the influences of Christianity, before we can fully believe in it, is found in the genius of the religion itself. It not only commands us to love God and man, but represents them in a light suited to awaken the pious and benevolent affections. God is compared, in the New Testament, to a Father. His attributes are set forth, not in the stern language of Paganism and of much of the Jewish Scriptures, but in a mild and attractive form. So kind, so merciful, so forbearing, does he there appear, that our hearts spontaneously love Him. We cannot contemplate his amiable features, and penetrate his goodness, without feeling an affection for Him.

So is it in the true exhibition of Man, of his nature and his relations to us. Before seeing him aright or feeling any affection for him, we ask, perhaps, "Why should we love our neighbor as ourselves? What claim has he upon us?" But when we once feel and realize by self-devel-

opement that man has a Soul worth more than the whole outward world; that it was created in the likeness of God; that it is capable of rising in virtue, holiness, excellence, until it shall so become a "partaker of the divine nature as to be filled with the fulness of God," we cannot look with indifference on our race. We feel and believe then that language cannot too highly exalt its capacity. We are then persuaded that imagination cannot conceive the destiny the Soul will attain, in the millions of ages before it, if it be but faithful to itself; if it do not, by sin and neglect, forfeit its glorious heritage. We realize that all souls that ever have lived or will live, are our own brethren, made, like ourselves, in the image of our common Father. Does not man thus viewed excite an interest in our hearts? Nay, when thus regarded, can we so imprison our affections, that they will not break forth, and bound toward, and rest upon, him? There is no heart so petrified by selfishness and sin that it does not love its fellows the moment they are seen aright, the moment a just value is attached to their nature. Nor is there one whose faith does not keep pace with his love.

I may perhaps make the ground now taken apparent by an extreme case. How would you proceed to convert an infidel, or one who

had never heard of Christ, to a faith in Christianity? You might commence by describing to him the excellence of the religion. You tell him that the Christian is one who loves God with his whole soul and his neighbor as himself. But what if he have never felt anything of this love? Can he form a correct idea of it from your words? By what argument addressed to the understanding alone can you lead him to appreciate this holy sentiment? "Taste and see that the Lord is good," says the inspired volume; and he who has not tasted cannot see his goodness; he who refuses the cup can have no just conception of the excellence, nor, of course, of the truth of, Religion.

"Of what use," says the undevout worldling, "is prayer? How is he benefitted who loves and serves God, beyond him that does not? I can see no advantage in religious services, nor in what are called spiritual affections." What can we say to such an one? But one thing: "Taste and see;" develope in your own heart the sentiment of devotion. Worship God, and come then and say,—for then only will you be qualified to say,—of what use are piety and prayer. Before you do this, you will be an incompetent judge in the case. To attempt the conversion of an infidel, or a skeptic by appeals to his understand-

ing alone is an almost hopeless task. If the heart be morally dead ; if the spirit and life be opposed to Christianity ; if the man be destitute of reverence, and possessed by selfish and isolated feelings, I should despair, while he continued in that state, of convincing him of the reality and truth of Religion.

CHAPTER VII.

THE SOUL THE TEST OF EXTERNAL EVIDENCE.

AMONG the obstacles our Savior encountered, perhaps the most discouraging was this, that the Jews continually demanded more external proof of his divine authority, and of the truth of his doctrine. But from their own character, and from the very nature of his doctrine, no such proof could be furnished them. "Give us," was their perpetual cry, "a sign from Heaven. Shew us the Father. Do some more wonderful work." As if by some outward manifestation he could at once prove himself the Messiah. He forever silenced these and all the like unreasonable expectations by those memorable words, "If they believe not Moses and the Prophets, neither will they be persuaded though one rose from the dead." "It is not because the miracles I perform," he would say, "are not numerous enough, or striking enough, but because you have not candid minds, and humble, obedient hearts, that you remain unbelievers. The foundations of faith can be laid only in a right state of heart and a correct practice."

These remarks are as true now as they were when Christ was upon earth. They apply as strictly to the modern caviler, doubter, or denier, as they did to those of his day. A man's faith does not depend on the number, or the wonderful character, of the Christian miracles alone. It depends on his own spirit, disposition, and life. If these be not right no miracle will carry conviction to his mind.

One who witnesses or reads of a miracle must possess "the spirit of truth." If he have this spirit the miracle will direct his attention to him who performs it, and he will listen candidly to his words. The miracle will give weight to his remarks ; it will incline him to receive whatever of truth they contain. There may be cases, in which the doctrine of a speaker, which at first view appeared somewhat incredible, will be made credible if he perform a miracle to establish its truth, in the same way as we incline to believe that *all* the ways of God are right, the more frequently we witness single events which exhibit his goodness. We know that, as this persuasion becomes more habitual in our minds, things which at first sight appeared inconsistent with his Providence become clearer and less trying to our faith.

But still, in no instance is a miracle sufficient, in and of itself alone, to prove any doctrine true.

There is no natural and necessary connection between the raising one from the dead, for example, and the truth that God is love, or any other divine truth. On the contrary, they are entirely distinct things. We are told that though Christ "had done so many miracles" before the Jews, "yet they believed not on him."

If our minds are prejudiced and our hearts corrupt, we may ascribe a wonderful work we personally witness, to deception. If we know the performer of it to be a bad man we shall certainly do this. He who is ill-disposed may impute a miracle to Beelzebub or the powers of darkness, and so doing, he will not, of course, believe the doctrine of the worker of it. But if a good man perform a miracle in support of a doctrine that seems good, "the spirit of truth" will dispose us to receive the doctrine as divine.

But suppose one to be not spiritually-minded, to have received an imperfect religious education, or for some other reason to have his outward nature but partially developed. It is evident that such an one, even though he were willing to believe, would be unable to appreciate a miracle. He might believe in a very general way, that Christ came from God, as Nicodemus did; or he might believe it, so far as he could on the testimony of another, or as a matter of argument, but

a full abiding, conviction of the truth of Christianity, he could not feel.

The character of Christ is a miracle. Even Rousseau—by no means himself either a Christian in belief or a faultless man, yet possessed of some devout tendencies and of benevolent feelings—even he could say that “The inventor of such a character as Christ’s must have been a more astonishing person than Christ himself.” But present this character to an unbeliever who is himself thoroughly sensual and corrupt, and who hence has no sympathy with the spirit of Christ. Will he regard the life of the founder as any proof of the truth of his doctrine? We know some infidels so debased as to traduce the very Savior himself. Can one of this class be converted by a miracle? We may speak to him of the value of the Christian faith; but he has felt nothing, and knows nothing, of that subject. It is a spiritual subject; but he is carnal. The doctrine is from Heaven; all his associations, habits, feelings, and tastes, are of the earth. We may hence lecture to him with the eloquence of an angel on the force of the argument before him, but he will not see it as we do, and it will not convince him.

To one who is pure enough to appreciate Jesus, and who considers, at the same time, the circumstances under which his character was formed, it

can hardly seem credible that he enjoyed no special influences from above. He was by birth a Jew; he belonged to a nation proverbially bigotted, and, at that period, corrupt and degraded, their religion a degenerate form; their rulers and chief men guilty of the grossest hypocrisy. He was brought up at Nazareth, a village remarkable for its ignorance and wickedness. He was trained as a carpenter, and had neither time nor means to obtain a liberal education. Yet, under all these disadvantages, he came forth, at the age of thirty, as a religious reformer, free from all bigotry, pure amidst the polluted, and preached a doctrine broad as the universe and enduring as eternity. He stripped Religion of its hideous disguises, and of the burden of forms and ceremonies that for a thousand years had been accumulating upon it, and taught that it consisted simply in love to God and love to man. These two great sentiments he lived out in his daily walk. The doctrine, embodied in his life and uttered by his lips, has resisted the fiercest opposition, and amid the shafts of its foes and the abuses of its friends, it has stood and flourished, and is now running the career of an immortal youth.

I do not deny that a spiritually-minded man may be so wedded to a peculiar philosophy, as to regard Christianity as but the ordinary developement of

human nature. But to most minds of a pure description Jesus, when viewed in connexion with his doctrine, will seem supernaturally inspired. To maintain that both his Religion and his Life lie within the range of universal experience, will appear to call for greater credulity than a belief in his peculiar connexion with God. That he should use such language as he sometimes did, calling himself "The way, the truth, and the life," saying "I and my Father are one," and "I am the resurrection and the life," will seem inconsistent with the humility that befits a mere man. It will be thought that, at the least, he must have *himself believed* that he enjoyed communications with the Father differing, not simply in degree, but in kind, from those ordinarily granted to our race; and if he was deceived in this respect, and was not supernaturally inspired, then the question may arise, what confidence can be placed in his teachings?

The miracles of Christ lose much of their influence when presented to the selfish, and for this reason. They were usually an expression of his benevolence, and they were addressed not only to the senses, but also to the affections, of those who witnessed them. They were not simply exhibitions of stupendous power. They were not intended to startle the imagination, or to overwhelm

the understanding, and awe it into belief. They were emphatically works of Love. Jesus healed the sick, fed the hungry, and restored the dead to life, where tender ties had been ruptured by death. He often exercised his miraculous powers under the most affecting circumstances. His "wonderful works" drew round him crowds of grateful spirits. "Hosanna, blessed art thou, Son of David," was the buoyant exclamation of those who had experienced his mercy. Benevolence was the law of his life. Well therefore did he call men to believe with the Heart, that he was truly the Christ. Promptly do the chords of love respond to his touch. But on the cold, and narrow-souled, the disinterestedness of Jesus is almost wholly lost. The power of his works is withstood, because the love that produced them is not appreciated. It is a remarkable fact that some of the most distinguished of modern infidels never sustained those relations in domestic life, which tend most to develop the social affections. Hobbes, Hume, Voltaire, Rousseau, and Paine, were instances of this kind. How little could such men comprehend the peculiar love of Christ in those miracles which restored a lost son to his widowed mother, and a daughter to the bosom of parental affection. In how many instances must one have been an husband and a father, to perceive the full force

of the evidence from this quarter. The ties of home were not only hallowed by Jesus, but they repay their great debt to Christianity, by leading us to appreciate one of the most glorious credentials of its Divinity.

Take the miracle of the resurrection of Christ, how differently does that affect different minds. Let it be presented here, where there exists a love of Christ himself, and it appears at once credible. Nothing seems more rational than that he who "brought life and immortality to light" should confirm that revelation by himself bursting the bands of death. How probable that Jesus should have crowned a life of self-sacrifice by dying on the cross for his friends.

But to one who has not followed him, in faith and love, to the tomb, to an irreligious man, what can appear so incredible as that Christ actually rose from the dead? Not realizing the object of that event, having no fellowship in the suffering of Jesus, and not knowing "the power of his resurrection," he cannot fully and cordially believe in it. And then too, so far as the resurrection is introductory to a future life and to its solemn retributions, it is to the bad man an unwelcome prospect. He dreads that coming world, for he expects only to suffer, if he shall hereafter exist. He tries hence to disbelieve it, and perhaps may succeed.

An illustration from the "Observations on the Growth of the Mind," although employed originally in reference to the Intellect alone, is still pertinent to our topic. "The resurrection of our Lord must have been a very different miracle to the angels at the sepulchre, from what it was to Mary. They saw it from the other side of the grave, with a knowledge of the nature of that death which they had themselves experienced; she saw an insulated fact not at all coincident with her views on the subject of which it was an illustration. They saw the use and design of that which had been accomplished; she saw the sepulchre and the linen clothes lying. As they gazed intensely at the same subject the veil was withdrawn, and they beheld each other, face to face. She was filled with fear; they with love and compassion. If Mary were to persist in judging of this subject from her own reason, from a knowledge of those laws with which she was previously acquainted, how could her views ever become angelic? How could the dark cloud of admiration be ever filled with the rich light of the rising sun?"

Unbelievers may be ranged in three classes, the sensual and gross; the philosophical; and the inwardly corrupt. Each of these classes is incapacitated for perceiving the weight of miraculous

evidence. The sensual are so absorbed in, and oppressed by, the things of sense, they have so little experience of spiritual things, as naturally to doubt, if not deny, their existence. Of course no miracle, wrought with the avowed object of attesting the existence and the importance of spiritual things, appears to them credible. They who control their lower nature, readily appreciate whatever appeals to the inward man; but not so the gross and sensual. They live only an outward life. Miracles address the inward life; hence they have no faith in them.

The philosophical infidel is generally addicted to some system of opinions, which excludes all others. But Christianity is infinitely broader than any one human system. It is so broad as to embrace in its philosophy all others, that is all the truth and all the good they contain. But its very comprehensiveness is with some a cause for its rejection.

There is a third class of unbelievers, those who "love darkness rather than light," and who "will not come to the light because their deeds are evil." Such cannot see the ladder which the patriarch saw in his sleep, because they are not like him, themselves ascending and descending in communion with God. They hope Christianity is not true, because, if true, it will condemn and punish

them. They take counsel of their wishes and thus flatter, and sometimes persuade, themselves that the gospel is a fabrication. No doubt Voltaire did this. Such was his pollution, that he even detracted from the character of Christ, and from the morality of the gospel. He appeared incapable of understanding and feeling the sublime, the simple, and the pure.

Let me not be thought to denounce all unbelief as a crime. I do not think every man, who rejects the Christian miracles, does it through his own fault. There are those who do it notwithstanding their sincere desire to believe in miracles. They would fain see and appreciate this kind of evidence, but their minds are so constituted that they cannot see it. When such persons avow a deep veneration for [the character of Christ, and when they exhibit his spirit, as they certainly sometimes do, I believe them honest and good men, though they appear to me unhappily mistaken.

We should be slow to deny such men a share in the blessings, present and future, of the gospel. It is for the all-seeing Judge to determine the guilt or innocence of each case of unbelief. Thus much we may say with charity, that no one can attain a deep and immoveable faith in Christianity, as a miraculous revelation, except through his having felt its sanctifying spirit.

There are those who may think I undervalue the purpose and the power of the outward evidences of Christianity. "What so good method with the heathen," they will ask, "as this; show him that Jesus was predicted by prophets of old; appeal to his miracles; tell him that those "signs and wonders" prove that he must have come from God. Unfold the amazing scenes of his death and resurrection; portray the gift of tongues and the extraordinary conversion of St. Paul, these things cannot fail to convince him."

To this course I object, that it mistakes the nature of Christianity. That consists of moral truths, and these cannot be made credible by works upon matter. A proposition in regard to the outward world may be made credible by some wonderful work performed on that world. But a truth pertaining solely to the inner man, and having no connection with material things, cannot be believed merely because a strange operation has been performed on some portion of those material things, to attest it. To give any weight to a miracle it must be performed for a spiritual purpose; and that purpose must be perceived and appreciated by the spectator of the miracle. If he be destitute of spirituality, he cannot comprehend the object in question, and hence cannot believe in it on the authority of the miracle.

It is admitted, too, by all Christians that the proof of miracles is not always unquestionable. In a work edited by Prof. Robinson, formerly of Andover, it is well said, that "To the mission of him who works miracles must be joined *the truth of the doctrine* he advances, the holiness of his life, his good understanding, and his concurrence with those whose life, mission and doctrine, have been already ascertained and approved. His miracles must be strictly examined, to see if they be true and will stand the test;—*whether they lead to God, to peace, to righteousness, to salvation.*" But if all these conditions are essential to the value of a miracle, then it cannot be itself the foundation on which a doctrine rests. It cannot be to all men and under all circumstances the authority on which a religion is believed to be from God. That authority must consist primarily in the *perceived truth* of the religion itself. The more pure a man is the more clearly will he perceive that truth. If he be impure, and hence unbelieving, the miracle will not convince him of the authority of the doctrine.

The circumstances under which our Savior and his Apostles wrought miracles go to sustain the position now taken. He required Faith as the condition on which he would work miracles. Of one place it is said, "He did not there many

mighty works because of their unbelief." But if these works were the basis of his doctrine, that which showed its truth and gave it its authority, where there existed the greatest unbelief, there he ought to have performed most miracles. When Paul cast out a spirit of divination, it was from one who had followed him and his associates with the cry, "These men are the servants of the Most High God, which shew us the way of salvation." Did not this language indicate an already existing belief? The cripple whom Paul cured was recommended to his favor because "He perceived that he had faith." This faith was doubtless strengthened and confirmed by, but it did not originate in, the miracle.

From the very nature of a miracle it requires virtue to be religiously impressed by it. It is a work, not contrary to nature, but superior to it, to its ordinary laws. He who would appreciate it must, therefore, possess a superior character. His views and feelings must be elevated. He must rise above the region of sense, and enter that of spirit. The more holy and morally exalted he becomes, the nearer he approaches that world in which the wonderful work originated, the more benefit will he derive from it.

Let it not be imagined that, by this view of miracles, I deprive them of their place among the

evidences of Christianity. I would here, as every where, avoid extremes. Because it has been the custom of the church, erroneously, as I think, to set forth the miracle argument as the all in all, so much so, that one cannot receive Christianity except through the supremacy of this argument; because the Church has hence been led to undervalue the evidence drawn from the intuitions of the soul, I would not, in shunning this error, proceed to denounce all miracles, and affirm that every man can perform them as well as Jesus could, if he only cultivate his natural faculties and become highly spiritual. Nor would I contend that a miracle is incredible in itself. I see no analogies which show that spiritual improvement increases our power over the physical world. Neither do I perceive the inconsistency of a belief in miracles because of their supposed infringement on "the laws of nature." These laws I do not yet perfectly comprehend. I cannot, for example, tell *how* the Soul came into being. It seems to me an event above the discovered laws of nature. Yet I cannot therefore deny the *fact* that it does in some manner come into being. Nor am I prepared to deny that a man can be raised from the dead because it would conflict with my understanding, or require a law of nature I do not yet comprehend. Give me evidence of the

fact and I believe it. I would that the outward evidence of Christianity should have its just weight. Let this and the inward evidence both be respected. Allow the ability of the soul to judge all spiritual things, all moral truth, and to feel its value, antecedently to miraculous evidence of that truth. Allow also that usually, to the candid mind and the already pious spirit, there is great power and divinity, and a confirmation of faith in those "wonderful works, which no man can do except God be with him."

There are those, I am aware, who deny the main position of this chapter, and contend that we are capable of perceiving intuitively no truths except those which relate immediately to our own faculties and their natural exercises. Nothing, they say, which pertains to our duties to God, and to his character, or to a future state, can be known except by a miraculous revelation. If this view be correct, then miracles were intended, not to confirm those already predisposed to believe, but to startle and convert the guilty, and to inform those entirely ignorant of the truths attested by miracles.

But by taking this ground we deny one of the best established principles of philosophy, viz., that the existence of a faculty always implies an object corresponding to that faculty. This is true

in the world of matter. God has given no animal any member or faculty, which was not intended to be exercised, and which has not, of course, some object out of itself on which to be exercised. Intellect implies objects of thought; the affections, something to be loved; conscience, duty to be done. Are our Religious capacities an exception to this remark? Does the power, for example, of knowing and loving God, do nothing toward proving that there is a God to be known and loved?

Nor will it meet this difficulty to maintain that the spiritual faculties of our nature were given us only to be employed on truths miraculously revealed to us. This view makes God partial, unjust, anything but a Father; for it excludes all who have not heard of the Christian miracles from the possibility of salvation. Besides, we do know that some among the heathen have arrived, unaided by miracles, to a faith in God's parental character and in a future state; and a single instance of this kind overthrows the position that man can perceive no religious truth by intuition.

I argue also against the possibility of a truth being revealed to another of which he was previously wholly unconscious. Take, for example, the being of a God. The Scriptures do not profess to reveal this truth; they assume that all men believe

by nature in a Power above man. Could they have made this a matter of entirely supernatural revelation? No, neither could they make any of the great doctrines of Christianity such. They could *confirm*, and they have confirmed, man's previous tendency to believe in a God, in his goodness, in a future life, &c. This is all a miraculous revelation can do.

And is not this enough? Does it not make the coming of Christ an inestimable blessing to man? He has established doctrines before imperfectly perceived and understood. He has "brought life and immortality," before dimly seen, "to light." He has confirmed the wavering, and to him who is disposed to believe, he has presented miraculous proofs. "To him that hath, more is given." For those who hearken to the teachings of consciousness, and who will come to Christ, and inquire, he has brought the revelations of miracle, to heighten and give all sufficiency and power to, the previous revelations of "the light within" them.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE SOUL RECOGNISES A LAW.

IN all I have hitherto said, the great principles of Morality and Religion have been assumed to lie within the scope of consciousness. Both Revelations, the written and the unwritten, have been regarded as subject to a test, and that test as the Soul. Our faith in the position thus taken may be strengthened by a more detailed examination of certain important truths. I propose, therefore now to consider that truth stated at the head of this chapter. It can be shown, I believe, that the Soul is conscious of being subject to a Law; in other words, that the Moral Law is revealed to our inward nature, and that its existence is independent of the will. As in the physical man the heart beats, the blood circulates, the stomach digests, and the lungs play, involuntarily, so in the moral man many functions are performed which we do not, and cannot, control at will.

Among the words in popular use we frequently hear the terms Right, Wrong, and Retribution. Where did these words originate? How does it

occur that so much is thought, said, and written, upon them? Why do they so interest mankind? The answer is, because man is a Moral being. He is subject to a law which extends its authority over every human being, and from which, "till Heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass, till all be fulfilled."

The first fact which goes to establish the existence of this law is, that man, as man, is endowed with a Sense of Right. We find ourselves, from early childhood upward, distinguishing good from evil. We can, by no reasoning, abolish from our minds this distinction. True, the same action does not appear to us equally criminal at one time and another. But some things seem to us wrong, and their opposites always right. Let the actions, which take in our sight this character, be what they may, gross or trivial, we cannot make all we do, think, and feel, appear equally good, or alike bad. Neither argument nor effort, direct nor indirect, can obliterate from our minds the great distinction of right and wrong. These qualities do not, to any extent, depend on reasoning; they are perceived by Intuition. Nor can we alter them, any more than we can alter the color, smell, or taste, of any outward object.

But we have, still farther, a Sense of good and ill Desert. If we perform this action, we feel

entitled to approbation ; if we do that, we are conscious of deserving blame. Nor do the consequences of our actions, when we could not have foreseen them, affect at all our decision, in either case. If I gave another poison, intending to destroy his life, but it should prove, as it sometimes does, that the quantity was so small as to do him good, instead of harm, still I could not acquit myself of guilt, for my intention was evil.

We never blame ourselves for sufferings which we could not avoid. But for those of a wounded conscience we do, and always must, hold ourselves culpable. There is a joy, which springs from a sense of having done right. For this joy we commend ourselves. But for that we derive from seeing the bright sun after a gloomy storm, we never commend ourselves. He who persists in a certain course of conduct, against the admonitions, warnings, and restraints, of his sense of right, can by no possibility, convince himself of his entire innocence. But if he take the same course, ignorant of its wrong, and conscious of never having excluded light from his mind intentionally, he then feels that no blame may attach to that course. One may commit an action which another could not do without the sting of remorse, and yet he may not be conscious of ill-desert. But let him be persuaded that he has been guilty

of a specific wrong, of falsehood, injustice, fraud, or cruelty, for example, he can, by no reasoning or force, so long as he sees it in that light, approve of the wrong deed.

Another exhibition of this inward Law comes in our sense of Moral Freedom. We first perceive the right; we then perform it; and afterward enjoy self-approbation. But why? Because we feel that our act was voluntary, that our will was free, that we might have done wrong, but chose to do right. In every step that precedes an action, and in the action itself, we are conscious of perfect liberty. We first chose to suspend our minds between two opposite courses before us. We then chose to deliberate upon, and between, them. We finally determined how to conduct. Now the sense of having done all this, and of our ability to have done the opposite, makes us blame or praise the deed; and these acts are the execution of the Soul's Law. No man was ever conscious of being compelled to do wrong. Even he, who is in theory a fatalist, feels himself in each act he performs, perfectly free.

Again, the certainty of the Moral Law is attested by that Sense of Obligation, which attends our conscious freedom. Not only do you perceive yourself at liberty to perform good or evil deeds, but you feel morally, though not physically,

constrained to do the one, and shun the other. You can commit sin, but it will cost a struggle. You must first attempt to obscure your native sense of right, and put darkness in the place of light. But this you cannot easily do.

The sense of wrong cannot be wholly obliterated, and leave no obstacle in your way. You must then force yourself, in a measure, to perform the wrong deed. This resistance to the right a free being can never approve. To him who feels that he has done right, the universe is all light and joy. The experience of this joy, added to our conscious liberty to act as we please, confirms in us that sense of obligation, which is at once an expression of the Moral Law, and a surety of its eternal duration.

An argument, of not less strength than the preceding, may be drawn from our sense of Individuality. There are circumstances, under which one may seem to himself but a part of, and connected inseparably with, the mighty whole of Creation. In one aspect, this view is correct. We are all joined to God and to the system amid which he has placed us. But not so joined as to have no personal, and distinct, character. All are not so one, that they can be lost or saved in a mass.

I need not argue this topic. Let me appeal to

that surest of all witnesses, Consciousness. Have you ever felt that you must answer personally for the sin of another? that it would be right that you should? nay possible, in the nature of things, that you could? Have you ever expected to be rewarded for the virtue of another? No, never. You feel that either of these results would be wrong, founded in essential injustice. Nor can your good or evil deeds be recompensed in your neighbor. And, as no two can thus exchange moral conditions, neither can the whole bear the sins of a part, or of one.

Every mind, in a sound condition and seeing itself as it is, is thus conscious of its individuality. We do all feel that, so far as mortals are concerned, our lot is in our own hands. We cannot anticipate, we dare not hope even, to escape the consequences of our personal transgressions. As soon should we think that another could support our frame by the food he took, as support our spiritual life by his virtues. No more can the world around us share with us our moral deserts, that is, partake in the merit of actions, in the performance of which they in nowise participated, than they can think with our minds, or breathe with our lungs.

But if we are thus completely distinct, each from all others, then the existence of the Moral

Law is to us an irresistible truth. If we are individually responsible, to be praised for all the good, and censured for all the evil, we do; if the Law is thus inevitable in its course, it follows, that as soon may "Heaven and earth pass," as one action, one word, one thought or feeling, pass its searching ordeal unnoticed, or unrecompensed.

Man naturally believes in a Power above himself. But not more firmly do we believe in the existence of God, than in his righteous retributions. There has never been a people who did not ascribe to their god or gods a moral intercourse with the human race. There have been those who did not fully comprehend the divine justice, nor pretend to, indeed, but they still believed in this attribute, and thought it the basis of the divine government. It is not in human nature to conceive of a Deity, who takes any interest in the conduct of man, and yet disregards the absolute and eternal principles of justice. We cannot imagine Him indifferent to moral distinctions, and as much a friend to the vicious as the virtuous.

But if God be indeed such a Being as our inborn sense of justice makes him, then in vain shall we think to do evil and escape, in one jot or tittle, its righteous deserts. The law under which we live is to us a divine law. As such it

will not bend, in the least. Every particle of guilt will be attended by suffering; and on the other hand, no good deed, no true word, not even the least virtuous purpose, will fail to receive its just recompense. God himself is pledged to the rigid execution of this Law.

Yet more, the nature of Virtue is such as to demand the strictest operation of the Moral Law. What is its essence? It is embraced in one word, Rectitude. It involves Rules, Motives, and Ends. The Rule or standard of virtue is absolute good. Fitness to produce certain effects is a consequence of virtue, but not essential to its nature. Its Motive is a love of the good, the true, and the right. It is not, as some imagine, a regard to the greatest happiness of the race, for that theory supposes us acquainted with that result, as we are not. Nor is it a regard to our own individual happiness. If it were so, we should never have done our first good deed, since before trying the effect of virtue, we could not have known that it would produce happiness. The End of well doing is the developement of our nature, or the perfection of the Soul. Of these qualities of virtue we are all in some degree conscious. They must, therefore, be in reality what they seem to us from analysis and argument.

But if Virtue be thus inward, and thus definite, if it be also, as it must be, everlasting in its essence, then, in no one of its qualities is there room for a relaxation of the Moral Law. We cannot lower its Standard; for right is right, and no particle of wrong can enter into its composition. Its Motives are determinate, and unalterable. Pure virtue can be pursued and attained only from a love of virtue itself. Nor can the End in question be changed. The object of our existence is inward perfection. Any courses that aim at an end short of this, involve error and imperfection. The Law then is such, that it must be obeyed. No act or feeling, that fails of this obedience, can comply with the eternal requisitions of the Soul.

The question may here be raised, whether the consciousness we have been describing is universal in the race. Should it appear that a part only of mankind, certain men in Christian nations, or even all who are called Christians, have the sense of Right, and of good and ill Desert, and of moral Freedom, and of moral Obligation, our argument would come to naught. But observation shews that there are no people destitute of this quality; and history shews that there never has been such a people on earth. The most unenlightened and barbarous nations have made, and do now make, a distinction between some actions as good, and

others as evil. It is true, what one calls right another sometimes calls wrong. But this does not prove that they have no moral perceptions. It only proves that, while they each pass moral judgments on human actions, they differ in these judgments. The faculty which they each employ in this work, does actually exist, and it is the same throughout the world. "We are told that the Battas, a nation of Sumatra, eat their prisoners alive," after a regular trial, if they were found guilty of midnight robbery, treason, and certain other crimes specified in their penal code. This they do because they think it right. It shocks us, as inhuman and monstrous conduct. But it is with the same moral nature, and under the same great Law, that both we and they form our different opinions of right.

You may take any moral trait exhibited in the most civilized, or virtuous community, and you shall find its exact counterpart in the most rude, or immoral community. The sense of well and ill doing, the presages and the compunctions of conscience, the love of good characters and dislike of bad ones, honor, shame, resentment, gratitude, exist throughout the wide world. One thing ought to be done, another ought to be avoided. This is praiseworthy, that deserves blame; everywhere these distinctions are made.

"But," it may be asked, "if all men thus discriminate between right and wrong, whence is it that multitudes disobey, as they then must, the dictates of conscience in their own breasts?" I answer, it is one thing to know the distinction between good and evil, and another to regard it in our own conduct. Multitudes, as the poet affirms,

" Know the right, and approve it too ;
Know the wrong, yet the wrong pursue."

The moralist writes eloquently in praise of virtue, yet his life often violates its Law. We all come short, in practice, of acknowledged duty. But our culpable inconsistencies do not prove that we did not originally perceive, and commend, the Right.

We come then irresistibly to the conclusion that the Moral sense is a universal endowment of our nature. Pagan and Christian agree in this. The Mahometan, necessarian and fatalist, as he is termed, though he be, still recognizes the distinction of good and ill desert. The Mussulman believes that there is a bridge, called *Alsirat*, in breadth less than the thread of a spider, over which he must pass to enter into Paradise, and that if he lose his footing, he will sink into the river of hell. This article implies, that if he pass safely over, he deserves to be saved, and if he fail, he ought to be punished for remissness. Christians differ about

the place of retribution, and the time it requires, but all believe in the thing itself. They hold that, either here or hereafter, man must suffer for his transgressions.

All governments are based on the idea of a Moral Law. True, human enactments fall short of perfect right. Penal codes are sometimes at variance with the eternal principles of justice. The purest government leaves many moral offences unpunished. No judge can so administer the law, that none shall suffer in their rights. But still all *aim* at justice. A standard is set up; good and evil are never regarded, or treated, alike. Effects and consequences are, for the most part, it is true, the ground of penal awards, but the intentions of the offender are never wholly lost sight of. There is in the Indian Council, as in the American Republic, a recognition of the existence, and the authority, of the Moral Law.

I have spoken of the rewards and punishments of the Moral Law. It is common to regard these much in the same light as we do those of human codes of justice. But we may not press this analogy. By too much of our language we convey the impression that the moral offender receives an outward, inflicted, punishment, like the fines, imprisonment, or death, inflicted by the law. So the rewards of well doing are spoken of as if a premium

were paid on the virtues. Christians often represent the sanctions of Religion in this light. The Heathen did always. Virgil tells us that the spirit, after its departure, is hung up to bleach in the winds, or plunged into the waters, or purified in the fires. Then a small proportion of mankind is admitted to the Elysian fields. But the great mass, after a penance of a thousand years, return again to bodies of flesh and blood.

But such are not the retributions of the Moral Law. These consist in the natural consequences of our feelings and actions. Human laws require a judge to explain, and a magistrate to execute, them. Not so the Moral Law. That explains itself. Conscience is its own interpreter, and, when faithfully enlightened, it never errs in its decisions. It is its own Executive. No array of outward circumstances, no pomp of a throne, a king, or a verbal sentence, is needed. In the conscious secrecy of each individual soul, the awful work goes silently on.

The Moral Law has one more feature, that distinguishes it from human enactments. It can never be repealed. There it stands, written on the living tablets of the soul. The body we inhabit will moulder back to dust. The physical law, by which it now lives and is in health, will

then pass over it but for its dissolution. So far as we are concerned, it will be as though the law had never existed. Not so with the Moral Law. Man is immortal ; so is the law of his Soul or himself. His outward part dies, the Inward, never. He cannot, therefore, if he would, cease to be a moral being. He cannot dismiss conscience, obliterate his sense of guilt or of merit, nor alienate his free will, nor alter, one whit, the nature of right and duty. Virtue is as immutable as God himself.

Nor can this Law ever become a dead letter, sleeping on the statute book of the Soul. No, not until mind ceases to think, not until you can efface the characters stamped on it at its birth, will good cease to give joy, or evil pain. We may do one wrong deed,—alas how many deluded beings have done it,—to cover up another. But the fire is only smothered for the moment. It will break out again, and with a desolating power. Down-trodden virtue may sometimes faint, for the tardy recompenses of earth. But let the deserving cast out all fear. He, who resolves always to do right, and await the event, cannot be, ultimately and entirely, disappointed. Not more surely will the overspreading sky smile on the pure, than they all, somewhere and at some period of their

existence, reap as they have sown. Nay, the outward universe itself, may vanish, as a scroll, but the Moral Law never. That will endure, till the conscious, immortal soul itself, shall perish.

CHAPTER IX.

GOD SEEN IN, AND BY, THE SOUL.

THERE are two modes of solving the great question of the being of a God. One consists in arguments drawn from the external world, the other in turning our thoughts inward. One individual looks on Creation, and finding there tokens of design, contrivance, and adaptation of means to ends, he infers the existence of an intelligent, and all-wise Being, by whom all things were created. He discovers also marks of benevolence, and these go to substantiate his faith in a God. Another is led by self-observation to conclude that all the knowledge, wisdom, and love, in his own soul, are but an emanation from a Fountain of these qualities, which is infinite and inexhaustible.

Which of these two sources of evidence is entitled to our confidence? I answer, neither exclusively. The world have, however, relied, for the most part, on the former. The works of God,—meaning only the outward universe,—have been the great evidence cited in books, and usually

leaned upon by believers. Has not this argument been sometimes pressed too far? Is there not a savor of presumption in undertaking to fathom the Purpose for which every object in nature was created? Have not some, in their zeal to multiply external proofs of the existence of the Deity, dwelt too exclusively on "things seen and temporal?" In one word, is the strongest argument for the being of a God, to be found in the material creation? Without wishing to under-estimate this argument, I would endeavor to present the other in a clearer light than it is ordinarily exhibited.

Some are disposed to speak slightly of the Intuitions of the soul, and to discard any evidence whatever, deduced from that source. But are they who deride the internal argument acquainted with that whereof they affirm? Their view of the subject arises, commonly, I believe, from a misapprehension of its true nature. There are few who would not be led by a careful analysis of their faculties to perceive that the great witness of the existence of God, that to which all others render but a collateral support, is the witness within us.

In early ages man looked mainly on the outward creation for demonstration of the existence of superior powers. He saw in the terrific thunder, in the swelling ocean, and the mighty river,

the presence of superhuman agency. The Manitou of the North American Indian is a being that operates only on the outward world, in the air above, the waters beneath, and the forests around. But as civilization advances, and the human mind is more highly cultivated, man comes to regard the world within him as a part of the domain of God. In his own moral and spiritual nature he discovers traces of the Divinity that formed it. The spirit within him is, as it were, a crystal mirror, reflecting from its polished surface the countenance of a Father above.

Nor should this circumstance throw discredit, as it sometimes does, on the truth at stake. For what does it prove? It proves that the belief in a power above man is not a matter of Education alone, since it is not confined to cultivated periods and refined minds, but, on the contrary, everywhere springs up in the soul spontaneously. The belief in a God must therefore be as natural as the belief in our own existence. It is instinctive; it comes by an unbidden impulse. Were it the result of reasoning alone, then, in rude ages, and in times of ignorance, Atheism would abound. But so it is not. Atheism is confined, for the most part, to periods of great intellectual development, like that of the French Revolution. The uncultivated and simple-hearted, the savage,

—who is to the educated what the child is to the man,—the savage and the child, always believe in a God. They are always spiritually inclined, superstitious indeed, yet shewing in their very superstition the elements of an adamant Faith.

I contend that the sense of a God is not drawn primarily from the works of nature; nor is it the result of any process of reasoning; but it comes to us through Consciousness. Mr. Locke, who will not be suspected of any Transcendental tendencies, speaks thus on this subject. "The real existence of other things without us can be evidenced to us only by our senses; but our own existence is known to us by a certainty yet higher than our senses can give us of the existence of other things, and that is internal perception, a *self-consciousness*, or intuition; from whence may therefore be drawn, by a train of ideas, the surest and most incontestible proof of the existence of a God." I differ from this writer only in regard to the length of the chain of evidence connected with our self-consciousness. He speaks of a "train of ideas" as essential to the argument. To me there seems but one idea,—the great fundamental one springing from "intuition,"—essential to the proof of a God. We are, in some degree at least, independent of the senses, in this case. We are not required to ask ourselves, "Have I

ever seen the Deity? Have I ever heard any voice that must have issued from his lips? Can the flower or the plant give testimony to this point?" No, we are to interrogate ourselves thus: "Do I never feel a veneration for some Being higher than man? Is there not an Object, unseen and incomprehensible, that calls forth my love, gratitude, and homage? Are there not whisperings within me, amid the cheerless hours of pain, disappointment, and affliction, that there is One who watches over me, and who will rescue me from these troubles, or make them conspire to my good?"

There are those who will regard this argument as more specious than sound. They tell us that consciousness is but a momentary impression, and that we can prove nothing by its testimony, beyond our own existence at the moment we feel it. They tell us that nature, the works of God, something outward and palpable, is all we can rely upon, in this case. But of what value are all outward witnesses, when you have thrown suspicion on that inward faculty, to which they address themselves? What to me is the rising sun or the bloom of summer, in proof of a God, if I may not trust to my self-conscious nature which interprets them? How know I even that I perceive this outward world, but by inward perceptions? A

sensuous theology invalidates the very instrument with which it works.

We have evidence of God in the Aspirations of the Soul. What mean these unlimited and illimitable desires? Let us gain what we may, gain never brings content. Riches do not satisfy; the appetite for them, on the contrary, grows with what it feeds upon. Fame, power, and pleasure, promise to fill the Soul; but they always deceive and disappoint us. Yet we still believe in something beyond us, that can fill and satisfy us. We pass on, from measure to measure, of acquisitions, and still cry "give," and still have faith in a Giver.

Nor is this true of those desires only, which attach themselves to outward things. The inward man, our spiritual nature, is subject to the same great law. The more Virtue we possess, the more do we thirst for. Wisdom and Goodness never reach the boundaries of the Soul. On the contrary, every limited acquisition speaks to us of, and impels us toward, an illimitable treasure. And what is that treasure? The finite suggests an infinite one, and that is God, the Infinite, the Eternal One, the wiser than the wisest, the better than the best.

It is these boundless aspirations which have lifted so many of the great men of earth into a

firm faith in God. Through them genius and power become believers. Mahomet felt himself in the hands of God. Cromwell regarded the Almighty as a preternatural and ever-present aid to himself. Napoleon believed himself a man of destiny. Irreligious as were some of his acts, he yet imagined that God was his ally. This it was which impelled him to the insane project of braving the December of Moscow. To this, his faith in God, in a God who would sustain him and give him ultimately the victory, he owed no small share of his mighty achievements.

Again, the human mind spontaneously and irresistibly believes in a connection between Effect and Cause. When we see an house, we instantly say, it must have had a builder. When we look on a builder, we also say that he must have had a cause, or creator. We know that he could no more have created himself, than the house could have built itself. But what must this Creator of man be? Not a finite, limited cause, like the builder, but an infinite and absolute cause. There can be no bounds to his power. He must be Almighty. Such is our native idea of God. By a similar process we arrive at his other attributes, wisdom, justice, goodness. We find these qualities in man. Whence came they? Man did not create them, he did not inspire himself with them.

They must have had an origin or a cause out of himself. That cause is God. Thus does the conception of this Being spring up of itself in the mind. It is, in effect, irresistible.

Man is by nature endowed with the powers of thought, will, and action. He can consequently create many things. All ascribe this attribute to genius. Were not Plato, Raphael, Milton, creators, in their divine arts? And if they were such, so are the whole race, to an inferior extent; for all the original faculties of our nature are common to mankind. But whence comes the Type of all thought, will, action, creation? Where is the Fountain of these powers? It is not in man; he does not form it within himself. The germs of every power he possesses were born with him. Who implanted them? It must have been God.

This principle holds true in a Moral and Religious aspect. Whatever virtue, holiness, or excellence, there is in man, he is not the fountain of it. He only draws from some higher source; and he is entirely dependant on that source. He is not an original, in this respect, but an image. He is not a parent, but a son. The head-spring of all that is pure in him, the original, of which he is an image, the Father of whom he is son, is God. Without Him, we were weak and worthless. Strike from existence this root of all perfection,

and the branches wither, and the stock becomes dead. The stability of Religious principle, the existence of absolute Purity, the deep and abiding energy of the immortal Spirit, and all that is glorious in human achievement or human conception, pre-suppose a God. They could not have been, nor can they continue to be, nor are they indeed now a real existence, if the Atheist is correct and God a delusion.

The doctrine now stated is confirmed by Pagan history. Whatever qualities the heathen themselves possessed, by an instinct of nature, they ascribed to their gods. When war was the ruling passion, they believed their chief deity was a god of war; and the contentious spirit of all their deities was then conspicuous. They were,

“Gods partial, changeful, passionate, unjust,
Whose attributes were rage, revenge, and lust.”

“The greater gods were looked up to,” in the words of Robert Hall, “as the guardians of the public welfare, the patrons of those virtues which promote the prosperity of states, and the avengers of injustice, perfidy, and pain.” As society became more refined and effeminate, the gods also were enervated. The Epicureans thought it inconsistent with the dignity of the godhead to have any share in the affairs of the world. He was a drone like themselves.

What do we see in all this, but the native propensity of man to trace every quality within himself up to an inexhaustible Fountain of these qualities ?

Again, man is an Imitative being. Every age of life and every faculty of our nature shew this. In an advanced state of society, man aspires to moral perfection. Now here, as every where else, he desires a Model ; he would fain see perfection in actual existence. Hence he looks up to the best of his race, for examples of excellence. It may be asked, "Does he not find all he can desire in this respect ? Are there not in history characters of unrivalled purity ?" Admit that there are ; who were the models of these unequalled men ? If we look only at human nature, the wisest man and the most holy man can have no models, there being none higher than themselves. This doctrine at once sets a limit to human improvement ; for if examples are essential to progress, they who have no example must cease to advance. But man is by nature a progressive being. The conditions of progress cannot then be forbidden him. There must be a Pattern higher than the best of our race, higher than man ever has attained, yes, higher than he ever can attain, though he should advance from strength

unto strength, through interminable ages. That Pattern is God, the matchless, the unspotted, One.

Indeed the very Ideal of perfection, let it consist in what particular qualities it may, intimates, and conducts to, the belief in a Being possessed of those qualities. There is, for example, in the soul an inborn sense of Justice. We have a conviction, or a feeling, term it as you please, that perfect justice is somewhere to be seen. But man has it not. Now a consciousness of the imperfection of human justice leads us to conceive of a Being above man, who is absolutely just. Let us suppose an individual charged with a crime. The positive evidence of his guilt may not be sufficient to convict him in a court of justice, while, at the same time, the circumstantial evidence may be such, that no reasonable man can help believing him guilty. What is the feeling of the spectator? It is that there is One who will punish the offender according to his true deserts. What have we here but a soul-felt proof of a God? Let the supposed case be our own, and no one would deny that the voice of conscience would be to us the very voice of God.

Man is disposed, moreover, to Veneration. He has a conception of excellence far greater than his own; and that excellence awakens his reverence. Not more naturally do we look down for

the brute, than we look up for some Being above ourselves. The Atheist may deride this disposition, and call it a weakness, but that will not destroy it. It will not do to say that the ignorant alone feel it, and therefore we are not called upon to explain it. Such is not the fact. The most enlightened of our race, those who best comprehend their own nature and the nature of goodness, are usually quite as reverent as the illiterate. It is the ignorant, the self-conceited and weak, indeed, who are commonly least disposed to veneration. Still, he who does not actually feel this sentiment of veneration is yet capable of it. That it is not developed, in his particular case, is probably owing to circumstances. In another situation he might be a reverent man. If then the development of our faculties tends to increase our reverence for some Power above us, or even if it do not diminish that sentiment, is not the conclusion legitimate, that there must actually exist some Object worthy our veneration, infinitely wise and good ?

I pass now to say that what has been hitherto advanced applies to the Entire Race. The belief in Superior Powers is common to all nations, and has been held in all ages. Man, savage or civilized, from the most degraded and ignorant, from the Hottentot to the Lockes and Newtons of

the race, has believed in the Divinity. No people are so barbarous, as not to exhibit some traces of this faith, that is, spiritual tendencies.

How shall we dispose of this remarkable fact ? It cannot be an accidental coincidence ; for accident is never thus uniform. It is not an invention of powerful intellects ; for the feeblest minds agree with them in this belief. It is, it must be, an inborn sentiment, and one, too, independent of reasoning, since the untaught receive it with the same confidence as the learned. The great evidence for a God must consist in the universal consciousness of this truth ; in the fact that all men, who are in a natural condition, feel an internal persuasion of it ; for all cannot be deceived. There is thus no moral truth that has stronger support than the being of God.

It may be objected that "there are some who deny the existence of God." But why do they deny it ? May not the Atheism they profess be the fruit of pride, or prejudice ? Men of solitary habits and of gloomy dispositions sometimes fear there is no God. The incredulous and suspicious doubt here as elsewhere. Some imagine themselves Atheists, who are not so ; they are perhaps Pantheists, or, to coin a new word, Man-theists. Many receive the name of Atheist unjustly from others. The number of those who deliberately

and habitually deny the being of God must be small. The real and permanent Atheist is rare, if not indeed an impossibility.

Some ascribe all the religion in the world to Priestcraft, and hence deride the idea of its reality. But the priest does not *create* men's faith in God. He sometimes takes advantage of, and imposes upon, an already existing belief. This is the utmost he can do by his craft.

Others say "the Religions of the earth are but Allegories. Men represent the creative energies of nature under the form and name of a god or gods." But why do they this? Why believe in any power superior to human nature? Whence comes this disposition to refer the existence of the Universe to some mightier power than man's? Does not this disposition prove the reality of that power, or at least intimate it so plainly that the objection refutes itself?

Some say "Fear made the first gods." But how could men fear what they did not believe to exist? Their faith must have been the parent, not the child, the cause, not the effect, of their fears. Superstition itself is indeed a strong testimony to the reality of Religion, for we never fear what we are satisfied is a delusion.

Besides, although fear might give rise to a belief in malevolent deities, it could not to, a belief

in benevolent ones, and since kindness has been ascribed by all cultivated ages, to some of their gods, fear cannot be the only origin of this faith. Then too if men found a God only in fearful objects, as in thunder, earthquakes, &c., how shall we account for the belief of those countries little or not at all subject to most of these terrible occurrences, such as Egypt, for example? If, moreover, faith in deities had been confined to times when men feared these beings because ignorant of cause and effect, the theory under consideration might be sound. But it has not been so. The faith in superior powers, on the contrary, rather increases than diminishes with the spread of science. "Ignorance" I know, has been called "the mother of devotion." Ignorance of what? Of the causes of nature; of her secret processes, and inward energies? If this be the ignorance referred to, then how shall we explain the faith of the philosopher? Why did Newton believe? Why is "an undevout Astronomer" said to be "mad?" How should the wise be thus firm in their faith in God?

But it is objected, finally, that "Reason cannot prove there is a God, and why should we believe in one?" Reason cannot prove *how* he exists nor how he began to exist, it is true. But do we believe in nothing, whose origin and essence we

cannot understand? Gravitation, what is that? Electricity, Magnetism, who can explain their origin and essence? The June rose, how does it bud and unfold so gently and sweetly its fair petals? Though we cannot answer these questions we still believe in the magnet and the rose, and reason justifies our belief.

Besides, God does not speak primarily, certainly not exclusively, to the naked reason, but to conscious feeling. He addresses the Soul. It is by an interior, unseen process, that we gain our most convincing evidence of a God. It is unjust to demand in this case a kind of evidence which the nature of the subject forbids. It is unphilosophical to attempt to reason another directly out of a feeling. Still our Intuition of God is not contrary to reason; for reason, used in this sense, recognises it as a truth, and receiving it as such, proceeds, to draw logical inferences from it. Indeed, in all our reasoning about God, we are compelled to start with the premise that he reveals himself to the pure Reason, that is to our spontaneous perceptions. Thus is God seen, not only out of the soul, by argument, but in the soul by intuition.

CHAPTER X.

THE SOUL PERCEIVES ITS OWN IMMORTALITY.

THAT man is, in some manner and to a certain extent, connected with the beasts that perish, is undeniably true. How far does this connection extend? Is it such that, in respect to the duration of their existence, one event befalleth both? Are the words of the Preacher to be construed literally, "As the one dieth, so dieth the other, so that a man hath no preëminence above a beast?" There is much in the external aspect of death to favor this opinion. To the senses it seems as evident that the last breath of man terminates his existence, as that the animal dies with his final gasp.

We may be told that man survives the event of death, and the proof of this may be deduced from Scripture. But why should we believe the assertion of Scripture on this point? How know we that it may not mislead us? Have we anything to support its affirmation on this subject? There are many who think we have not. They say, "Man is immortal, because the Bible tells us he

is so. We must have faith in that, faith in God, faith in Christ, then we shall never doubt our immortality." But who has an unwavering belief in the Soul's immortality, taken simply as a matter of trust? The number of such, I suspect, is small. There are multitudes who, when bereft by death of a friend, manifest very little faith in the present, actual, existence of him whom they mourn. There are thousands who, when the subject of their own dissolution occurs to them, find their faith in a future state dim and uncertain. They are then disposed to put the skeptical question "If a man die, shall he live again?" Who then will not at least accept gladly a confirmation of his belief in immortality?

It is usual for men, taking the testimony of Scripture on the subject, to speak of man's alliance with higher orders of beings, as saints and angels, in proof of his immortality. As they live forever, so, it is said, shall we, being spiritually connected with them. But so little do we know of the higher orders of beings, that with many this argument has little weight. It produces almost no effect on their character; it is but a dead faith. Can we not awaken in them a more quickening and operative belief?

I have thought that we might not only treat of man's relations to superior orders of beings, but

of his relations to the inferior creation, in proof of his immortality. Man has, I believe, a preëminence in this respect above the brutes that perish; and this preëminence is, to some extent, capable of discovery, and of illustration, and proof. The evidence of it does not, however, lie on the surface of our being. It requires not only an inward observation of our own nature, but an outward and accurate observation of the animals, and reasoning therefrom, to give us a full conviction of our own superiority. The proof of it depends, indeed, in the last analysis, upon Consciousness. That is the basis of the logical induction we employ. There is much in a superficial view of the subject to favor the doctrine that man dies, in all respects, like the brutes. There are indeed aspects, in which they seem superior to us.

In the first place, man considered merely as an animal, that is, in his Physical nature alone, seems inferior to the lower creatures. He enters this world in want, and perfectly helpless, while they are sagacious, and often able at once to provide food and shelter for themselves. His faculties at his birth are but in embryo. The infant seems of another race, when compared with the mature man. What a pitiable object, both in mind and body, does he appear. He has no natural means of defence against danger and death, while the

animals come armed into this world, the eagle with talons and beak, the lion with claws and teeth, and the elephant with tusks. Some animals have senses more perfect than ours. The hearing of the hare, the scent of the dog, and the sight of the eagle, are instances of a great superiority in this respect. Man boasts of his erect posture, but the bird also is upright, and it is swifter than he, yes, swifter even than his course on the wings of steam. The horse surpasses him in strength, and the elephant in longevity. Man too has a second childhood. In old age he is again thrown on the compassion of those around him. Not so the inferior animals. Up to the period of their death, as a general law, they are vigorous, and capable of entire self-subsistence.

Again, the Instincts of the lower animals are to them a perfect guide. The bird builds its first nest on the principles of mathematical science. It exhibits a skill in architecture, which man can acquire only by years of study, and experiment, and labor. Those changes in the seasons, which a single man could not have predicted without a life of observation, if indeed ever, the animal foresees, the first year of its life, with perfect certainty. The bee always builds its cell right, the first trial. Man can imitate it only after unwearied efforts.

We boast of reason; yet it is a faculty capable of error, as instinct is not. A poet says of the two,

“Reason progressive, instinct is complete;
Swift instinct leaps; slow reason feebly climbs.”

In the selection and use of their food, the animals show the value of Instinct. So exact is their sense of taste, that the ox eats two hundred and seventy-six herbs, but rejects two hundred and eighteen; the goat, the sheep, and the horse, make other equally careful selections of articles of food.

“—————They never poisons choose.
Instinct than reason makes more wholesome meals.”

The animals seem favored above us in this respect also, that they live in a happy ignorance of their coming Death. They appear to make no preparation for any thing beyond that event, nor to dread its approach. But man is doomed, from his early days, to foreknow his dissolution. There stands the ghastly portrait, move which way he please, turning its terror-striking eye ever upon him. How shall we explain this fact, and not impeach the goodness of God? What compensation has he given us for this apparent advantage of the animal over us?

I answer, the doctrine that “there is a Spirit in man,” of such value as to counterpoise these disadvantages, can alone solve the mystery. Man

has a physical organization, that is a body, common to himself and the brutes. This is all, so far as we know, that belongs to the animals. We can account for all they do, and all they appear to be, on the supposition that they are body alone. But we cannot explain all that man does, and seems to be, on the supposition that he is nothing more than a body. In the brute, the body reigns; in man it serves; it is only an instrument in the hands of a power higher than itself; and so exalted is that power, that it intimates and shadows forth its own Immortality.

The first advantage of man, and earnest of his future life, is the fact that his powers and faculties are not, like those of the brutes, soon brought to Perfection. They have some qualities matured at their birth; others capable of being more fully developed afterward. Still this development requires but a short period of time. The fledgling, when it first leaves the nest, can scarcely fly, and soon falls to the earth. But, a few days pass, and it can soar high on its wing, as high as it can after years of experiment. But the powers of man may continue to unfold up to the hour of his death. The last year of his life is to him as much a teacher as the first. We see no proof to the contrary, but all in favor of the opinion, that if he could live after death, his soul might be still far-

ther developed. Death seems to interrupt him in the midst of his work. Is it credible that it is anything more than an interruption ?

But again, the animals unfold their faculties of Necessity. They are governed by instinct, and hence they must know all they do know, and must do all they perform. They cannot choose to be ignorant, unskilled, or imperfect, in their sphere. Man, on the contrary, is a Free being, gifted with the ability to control, direct, restrain, or put forth, his faculties ; to be learned or unlearned, wise or simple, good or evil, as he shall prefer and choose. What means this mighty power ? Does it not form a significant distinction between him and the brute ? Is there not here an indication of such a superiority as may rightfully claim an immortal existence ?

Then, too, consider that man is the Master, and the animal always the servant. To us is given dominion over the whole range of the lower creation. "Every kind of beasts" is subjugated and "tamed" by man. How inferior do they hence appear ; and what a prerogative is thus given to our race. Who does not see in it a powerful argument for man's spirituality and consequent immortality ? This argument is strengthened when we consider that there is no being on earth placed above man. Not only does he rule the

entire brute creation, but he is himself above all rule. There is no order of creatures, in this world, higher than he. "Is this sovereign of the earth to be himself reduced to earth? Is it to be believed, that so complete a dominion over all the beings which surround him, will terminate in the complete annihilation of his own existence?" Was he elevated to so high a position, only to be the more disastrously brought down to naught?

But, again, man, being the Final End of this terrestrial world, cannot be consistently destroyed. For that, for which all things else were made, must be itself indestructible. If we deny this, then we make this world to have been created for no ultimate purpose. The whole universe, indeed, may then prove, in the issue, a failure; that is, the production of an imperfect being.

We have also, in the fact of man's dominion over all below him, an intimation of superior existences, of some description. It is not credible that the chain of being terminates in man. But if it does not, then the transition must be unnatural and violent, if man has no connection with those higher creatures. In one word, we are joined to the inferior creation by our bodies; have we no principle or faculties, which join us to superior orders of beings? If we have, and if they live forever, as all spirits must, shall not we also?

Again, man has many Desires which are not manifested in the brute. He is not satisfied with this present life. Everywhere and in all ages he has felt the desire of a future existence. This is an instinct of his nature ; and so strong is it, that even the infidel cannot overcome it in his breast. He cannot but wish and hope that he may live again. I regard this fact as no slight argument in proof of a future state.

Again, we are dissatisfied with all we have done, and all we can do, upon earth. There is in the soul a yearning for Perfection, the desire of an opportunity to finish the work given it to do. Joined to this is the conviction that in this world we cannot fulfil our destiny ; that, if we have no other sphere of existence, then our best hopes must be blighted, our fond plans frustrated, our work broken off in its midst. But the brute creation are visited so far as we can judge, by none of these desires, nor by this dissatisfaction. They are content with their present existence. Their work is all done here. Their instincts are all gratified here. This seems the very theatre on which their entire nature was made to be displayed. Can it then be that man, with his burning desires, superior aims, and far-reaching hopes, has no preëminence, in the length of his existence, above the beasts ? If he has not, then God has

made one creature to live at variance with its instincts.

But we find in this quarter another argument for human immortality. Not only has man the desire of an interminable field of action, but he has also the Capacity for unlimited Improvement. Instinct confines the animal within definite bounds. He can acquire no knowledge, wisdom, or skill, beyond a certain limit. He cannot profit by his past errors or deficiencies. He cannot devise new methods of action, and try diversified experiments. As he practised at first, so must he now, so must he until his death. How different, in this aspect, is man from the brute. We are encompassed by no barriers. The human mind outruns its own past, and embraces new thoughts and untried views. It is not trammelled by the present, but leaps forth into the boundless future.

Indeed man only has the very power of Thought. He alone can abstract and generalize. He only understands the objects that surround him, penetrates the universe, and discovers the connection between cause and effect. The animal does not apparently, like man, distinguish between its own sensations and the object perceived. It cannot discern between itself and its separate organs and their functions. It does not, in any way, so far as we can judge, distinguish itself by any pecu-

liarities, from its race. But man is an individual, separated consciously from all other individuals. His mind projects itself into all matter, and penetrates all spirit. With telescopic power it surveys the whole heaven of science, and penetrates unexplored regions, and finds worlds upon worlds, for its illimitable survey.

The faculty just named springs from another, which distinguishes and ennobles our race; I mean that of SELF-CULTURE. It is apparent that the lower creatures have little control of themselves. They do indeed think, in a certain sense, but only as directed by outward impulses. They have those thoughts and feelings, it may be, which spring directly from sensation. What they see, hear, touch, smell, awakens their attention. But they cannot use the materials derived from the senses, for reflection. Their memory is excited only by local circumstances. The dog remembers a thing only when place, time, and manner, act distinctly upon him. Fancy also operates in the brute at the bidding of sense alone. There must be something without to excite it. Not so with man. He sends forth his Memory at will, and calls up, as he chooses, any one of his inward treasures of experience. He commissions Imagination also, and she speeds to the verge of the Universe. How glorious is this faculty. How

immeasurably does it exalt man above the imprisoned and constrained animal. Enabled, as we are by it, to advance interminably upon the past, how forcibly does it speak of an immeasurable future, in which we may exert our prerogative of self-improvement.

The animal, as a consequence of its inability for self-culture, is not improved by being taken out of its wildest state. The domesticated animals are a degenerate race, when compared with those found in the forest. But man often rises and improves, by this transition; so that the rude anglo-Saxon becomes, in process of culture, the accomplished and powerful Briton. Is not a race thus capable of being improved, by being taken from one state to another, in this world, destined to enter another and a spiritual scene of progress ?

Man has, moreover, the power of Communication far beyond the lower animals. We sometimes imagine, the sweet songsters of the forest are conversing, in intelligible tones, one with another. Let it be that they are; what a narrow compass of sensations and emotions can they, at most, express. Joy in the sunshine, animal passion, strains of sorrow, often, it is true, as in the turtle-dove, when interpreted by us gifted beings, made to signify much. But how little, after all, does the

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bird convey to its mate ; how almost nothing, when contrasted with the communications of the noble faculty of speech. Nay, I would point even to the speechless, and ask what the animal with all his powers, can express, compared with even a dumb Man. Yes, I would adduce the unfortunate Laura Bridgman, destitute of seeing, hearing, smelling, and but slightly capable of taste, with the single sense of feeling in perfection, and ask where is the mere animal possessed of all these faculties, that could impart from itself, the stores of knowledge, —did it, in the first instance, possess those stores,—which she has imparted, or promises to impart, through the mighty aid of man ? Is not a being thus qualified for communion with others, destined to exalted fellowships in coming worlds ?

Man too is capable of Disinterestedness. He can perform deeds which shall have no respect to a personal reward. But we see no proof of this quality in the inferior animals. True, the parent makes sacrifices for her young.. She will even die in their defence. But she does this from instinct, never from principle. If this could be, then animals would sometimes suffer and die for other species than their own. At least their self-sacrifice would not be confined to parental instinct. We may be told of the faithful dog depriving himself of food, and in some cases even

giving up life, to save his master. But for whom are these sufferings endured ? For a friend and benefactor. They spring, at most, from gratitude for the master's kindness. In no sense are they purely disinterested services. Shall not man, this noble being, who can live out of himself, and who is thus gloriously superior to the brute, live also forever ?

CHAPTER XI.

THE SOUL PERCEIVES ITS OWN IMMORTALITY.

THERE are other powers of the Soul to be now examined, which indicate its undying nature. God has endowed us with Conscience. This springs from a sense of Right, and is the basis of Duty. But who ever speaks of the duty of an animal? We see nothing in the actions of the brute which implies remorse, or a consciousness of guilt. We see, indeed, indications of shame, which seem an evidence, at first sight, of a sense of wrong. But the shame of animals comes all from the influence of man. In their natural state they exhibit nothing of the kind. Nor are all animals capable of shame. So that we have in this feeling no universal capacity, nothing which belongs to their nature. Nor have we any other manifestation of conscience. The animals are governed, in most of their actions, by hope and fear; they are incapable of being influenced by the higher principles of conduct. You may teach a brute, it is true, to perceive, in specific instances, a distinction between right and wrong. But how can you teach

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him ? By an appeal to his conscience, to an inborn sense of right and wrong ? No, he has no such faculty, nor the capacity to acquire it. He can be made to do right, only by your aid, by your pampering his appetite, or showing him some kindness, or exhibiting your approbation of particular acts he performs. These principles may be appealed to, until you form in him the habit of doing what you teach him is right. But even then he has no knowledge of right, as such. You may operate on his fears, and threaten him with punishment, and thus prevent his doing what you tell him is wrong. But he can learn nothing more ; he is incapable of being moved by any abstract consideration, by any thing, merely because it is in itself good or evil.

Not so with us ; we are born with a capacity to perceive the essential, absolute, and eternal, distinction between right and wrong. Nay, so is this power wrought into the very texture of our being, that we can never eradicate it. There is not, nor ever can be, a human being, in a sane condition, in whom the sense of Right does not exist. Man, as man, recognises one action as good, and another as evil.

Still more, man is capable of loving the right because it is right, and of abhorring the wrong, as such. Impelled by this sentiment he can per-

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form duty because it is duty. He can act right without reference to reward or punishment, and from a simple love of goodness. Multitudes have thus conducted themselves, "choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God," because they *were* his people, "than to enjoy the pleasures of sin." This trait I regard as an earnest of immortality. So does it detach man from those outward and perishable things which sway the lower creation, so does it emancipate us, not only from earth and space, but from all finite things, and hence from time itself, as to give strong hope of an interminable existence.

Conscience, finally, preaches directly of man's immortality. Duty has reference to the future. Its sanctions are eternal. The expectation of a just retribution is universal in our race; and retribution always presupposes immortality.

Observe, furthermore, the Disproportion between the tasks of the body and those of our inward powers. The brute toils for food and shelter. The parent is assiduous in providing these things for her young. In so doing, every faculty she possesses is put in complete requisition. It demands all the skill, and all the time, of the animal to take care of the body. For this work God seems to have precisely adapted its whole nature.

But far is this from being true of Man. He is gifted with capacities which transcend immeas-

urably the sphere of sense. His Intellect, if confined in its efforts to the wants of the body, is a miserable slave; it is conscious of servitude. There is no man so dead to all inward perception, as not sometimes to feel, that his mind was given him for a higher purpose than to minister to the appetites and necessities of his animal nature. The physical world is all too narrow to occupy the mighty man within us. Wherefore this moral Will, with its illimitable energies? Do you believe it was designed merely to achieve the accumulation of wealth? By his taste for Beauty man enters the sphere of the fine arts, and enjoys the compositions of Mozart and Beethoven, of Handel and Haydn, the paintings of Raphael, the poetry of Milton, and the noble productions of sculpture and architecture. Was it for outward gratifications alone, that God thus nobly endowed us? Can you persuade yourself that this Heart, with its irrepressible Love, was placed in your bosom merely that its affections might be bestowed on the things of sense? No, that must be as enduring as God himself, which is worthy such affection as ours.

If, let me add, we are not immortal, if, after all, it shall prove that these glorious principles were placed within us only to worship and obey the body, then the condition of the animal is bet-

ter than ours. For, with all our toil for outward indulgences, he who relies upon these for his whole peace and happiness, enjoys his existence less than the quiet herds that graze in the valley do theirs. In them all is harmonious. The mind labors wholly for the body, and it does for it none too much. It is content with a lot, which, when taken by man as his best portion, leaves him disappointed, unsatisfied, and wretched. Man must be destined to a higher sphere. This noble nature bears on its front the seal of immortality.

Again, the animal lives in the present ; he looks little to the future ; and when he does, it is only to provide for some near want. But man is full of Prospective principles and feelings. To-day seems to him of slight value, compared with to-morrow. He dwells in that which is to come. His happiness consists far less in what he has, than what he hopes. Anticipation is his daily bread. This characteristic of our race is universal. It is manifested not only in Christian lands, but even among savage tribes. Nay, it is said, there are nations who have almost no faith in any God, who yet believe in a future state. They offer sacrifices to the souls of the departed ; and tie shoes to their feet for their journey to the next world. To my mind this confidence in a future existence, and this disposition in man to create

for himself a Heaven to come, show him to be destined for that state. It cannot be that he will perish with the unaspiring brute. When I think of man's desire for, and aspirations toward, and his consequent faith in, immortality, how many have died at the stake for this faith, and how many on their death-bed have triumphed over the last enemy, through its power, I cannot believe it a delusion.

We have touching instances, on record, of the indestructible energy of this principle. The widow of Lord Kildare, who suffered death in the Tower of London during the reign of Henry VIII, was accustomed, we are told, through her life, nightly, before she retired, to resort to his portrait, and there with a solemn air to bid him adieu. There are thousands who have a faith in the existence of the departed hardly less strong than this. Yes, the voice issues from every thoughtful spirit,

"death and decay

Our mother Eve bequeathed us—but my heart
Defies it;

* * * * *

I feel my immortality o'ersweep
All pains, all tears, all time, all fears ; and peal,
Like the eternal thunders of the deep,
Into my ears this truth—' thou livest for ever.' "

I name one more characteristic of man. He is a Religious being. He is by nature devout;

that is, he is disposed to believe in, and reverence, an Unseen Power. This disposition is a part of his very soul. Let him pervert and abuse, as he may, his higher nature, he can no more live without some tendency to Religion, than he can without seeing, when the light of day is before his open eye.

Man believes in a future state, which is the gift of God. The child has this faith; so has the savage. It is related of one of the Natchez Indians, who had lost her companion by death, that when, as was the custom of her tribe, she offered herself up to follow him into the other world, she used this remarkable language: "The Great Spirit has been pleased to call him, and I shall soon go and join him;—be not grieved; we shall be longer friends in the Land of Spirits than here, because we do not die there." Such is the Religious faith of the savage. It is confined to no nation or age. Wherever man exists, there exists also this belief in spiritual things.

But nothing of this kind is seen in the lower creatures. They worship no God. They reverence no superior being. We can detect in them no faith in, nor foundation for, any belief whatever in spiritual things. Who then shall maintain that man is a mere animal, destined, like the brutes, to perish in the dust? Religious capacities

not only argue, but imply, the reality of Religion. Our inward nature thus utters an immediate response to his voice, "who hath brought life and immortality to light in the gospel."

Let us now pass, from this relative testimony, to some of the absolute proofs of man's immortality.

Man is an ignorant being; he knows little of the Universe about him and of its Almighty Creator. He is unacquainted, to a great extent, with his own nature. What is he? How formed? Of what capable? To what destined? These points involve many mysteries. The inquiry arises "Are the mysteries, that so perplex us, never to be cleared up? Is there no key to them? Did the Author of our existence intend to keep us forever in this darkness?" I cannot think that He did.

In the first place, we observe that his plan, so far as our experience reveals it, is to give us ever-increasing Knowledge. We knew something of this world and of ourselves the moment we saw the light of day; but yet very little. From that time up to the present, the myriad mysteries of our infancy have been more and more explained to us. We can, by research, understand ourselves individually, and our common nature, still better and better, even to the end of this life. Does not this circumstance intimate our coming destination? Is it credible that a part only of the mys-

teries around and within us,—especially so small a part as we know on earth,—is all that God intends to reveal to us? On the contrary I regard the communications we already enjoy as designed but for a foretaste to quicken our appetite for the knowledge of eternity.

If we are to live again, then the key to all mysteries is placed in our hand. We have only to unlock the gates of paradise, and enter in, and become wise as angels. This view brings our whole being into harmony. It reduces all apparent incongruities to a beautiful consistency. That toil to penetrate the future, otherwise so inexplicable, a labor wholly lost, becomes at once intelligible. It is but the struggle of the soul to anticipate what, in due time, it shall receive.

I remark next, that there is among all nations an Instinctive Propensity not only to believe in an uninterrupted existence, but even to determine the character of its employments hereafter. The retributions of the future state are usually made continuous of a work previously commenced. The idea of immortality receives its clothing from the spirit of the age, the higher or lower degree of philosophical culture, the mode of men's life, their favorite occupations, and their notions of the highest happiness and misery. The savage is to renew his chase; the Normans imagined that

those who fell in war would enjoy fighting hereafter. They were to feast in the hall of Odin, and to quaff at night full horns of mead and beer. The just, who did not die in battle, were to enter a more peaceful elysium, a resplendent palace, begirt with verdant meadows, and shady groves, and fields of spontaneous growth. Among the joys of earth, few are so generally felt as the domestic enjoyments. The pleasures of the life to come are accordingly compared to those of the reunited members of a long parted family. These constitute, as one has well said, a "happy state of companionship and mutual good-will,—a source of such pure and unalloyed delight, and one so incompatible with the cares and sorrows of the world, that the religious belief of the most civilized nations, and the rude traditions of the roughest savages, alike number them among the first joys of a future state of existence, provided for the blest and happy." The Christian conceives of Heaven as a scene of pious conversations, and of communion with God, and of seraphic songs. All this is in continuance of his present employments. Now what are these various conceptions, but a presentiment, sure, trustworthy no less than trusted, of an imperishable heritage?

Take again the fact of man's strong Desire to live after death. I have spoken of this as one

mark of our superiority to the animals, and in that light an intimation of immortality. But there is another view of it hardly less indicative of the same truth. Man's desires are Infinite. There is nothing on earth which gives him entire satisfaction, nothing which fills his mind. "Man's unhappiness," in the words of another, "comes of his greatness; it is because there is an Infinite in him, which with all his cunning he cannot quite bury under the finite." But the idea of Infinity presupposes the endless duration of the being who has it. "Nature," as one has well said, "never gravitates toward nothing." If she implant a tendency in any of her works, physical or spiritual, that tendency is always the presage of some object or end to be attained.

This truth is illustrated in our ordinary desires. There is no one of these which fastens itself upon rational objects, for which God has not provided its gratification. We desire Knowledge. All life is pouring this treasure into our minds. We desire Society, the gratifications of Taste, Occupation, Honor, Gain. All these have their corresponding objects. So have the animal appetites. Are the spiritual desires an exception to this great law? Is our meaner nature indulged, while the higher and nobler one was made only to famish in its wants? If not, then the desire of Immortality,

which is so elevating in its tendency, shall be indulged by our Father ; then will he fulfil the promise he has given us in our nature.

The argument just presented derives new force from the fact that, as Death draws nigh, we cling with fresh earnestness to the desire and hope of immortality. The decline of health leads us to trust in an undying principle within us.

“ The soul’s dark cottage, batter’d and decay’d,
Lets in new light, through chinks which time has made.”

When we become certain that our dissolution is at hand, we relax willingly our hold on this life. That which in the prime of our vigor we dreaded, and from which we turned away, while in suspense between hope and fear, is now converted into an endurable event. The Soul is reconciled to its departure. It welcomes, nay, it often pants for, the final hour. Can it be that the faith in our future existence, which thus calms the spirit, rests on a delusion ? Does not nature rather sanction and make sure the confident language of Scripture on this point, “ I have fought the good fight, I have kept the faith. Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of life ? ”

Another indication of man’s immortality is seen in his sentiments in relation to the Dead. What mean that belief in the communication of the dead with the living, that conjuration of the

departed, and that fear of their spirits, so prevalent in all ages? The belief in apparitions, which Dr. Johnson says many more entertain than will acknowledge it, must have some great truth at its foundation. What is that truth, but the fact that the Soul will live after death, and feels this sure presentiment of its destiny?

How sacred is also the memory of the dead. How instinctively do we recoil from a censure of their deeds. Even heathen morality instructs us to "Say nothing but good of the dead." What is this but the expression of a secret conviction that they still live? We feel that they hear, although they cannot refute, our allegations. It is partly, at least, a sense of injustice done to those capable of still suffering from our words, but yet not of self-defence, which bids us spare the departed.

Who does not derive new faith in immortality from the contemplation of a departed relative? When we look on the body of a lost friend, we feel that he is still with us. And what a sacredness is there now in his presence. Involuntarily, as we approach his coffin, our step is light, our voice subdued, our manner reverent. Here lies one already entered, by his better nature, the sphere of immaculate purity, and of celestial light. As the sun sinks in the west only to be succeeded by the silvery moon, so has the spirit of our friend

left behind it this pale body, a reflection from Heaven's fair form. How does the spectacle cool our burning desire for, and loose our adherence to, this animal life. A gentle cord is drawing us upward. Under these circumstances, to doubt our immortality would seem an act of profaneness.

Consider also the reverence for the Tomb which is common to our race. Among the Indian tribes no thought is so sad as that of leaving the graves of their fathers. The very dust where they sleep is hallowed. We are told of one who, when compelled to quit his home on the banks of the Kennebec, disinterred the body of his child and bore it on his shoulders, for two hundred miles, to his new abode. What a testimony was this to the indestructibleness of the Soul. Every cemetery, prepared, adorned, and revered, by man, is a new monument to an eternal life. The millions of pilgrim feet that have repaired to the tombs of the departed and renowned, whether to the Holy Sepulchre of Palestine, or to the ashes of the prophet of Mecca, have all left in their footsteps traces of immortality. The dead preach sermons on this topic more eloquent and convincing than the ablest of the living.

Again, God is immortal, and man, being made in his image, must be so also. Even Pagan mythology teaches that its deities are indestructible.

Of the multitude of gods that were anciently said to preside over fountain, and river, over wood, mountain, flower, and fruit, not one was perishable. They never passed away from the mind, and called for new ones in their stead. But their qualities and characters were nearly all human. They resembled man ; or rather he resembled them, though he was their Archetype. And if in other respects, certainly he was in that they were, like him, immortal. Was not here the glimmering of a great truth ? Does not the mind in its rudest state thus connect human, with the divine, imperishableness ?

But, if by the unlearned, so also by the philosopher, this relation between man and the Deity has always been recognized. The argument from effect to cause leads us irresistibly to the belief in a God. But in what kind of a God ? One whose nature is, in its essential, moral features, like that of man. He is the Father, we his children, made in his likeness. We are compelled by reason to believe God is an Infinite Being. But no more certain are we of this truth than that we ourselves have within us the element of Infinity. Had we not this element, all our ideas must be finite. But they are not so. You can think of an imperfect being ; so can you of a perfect being. This is our idea of God ; it is an idea which implies

Infinity. Many words we daily use, such as eternal, and unchangeable, show that we can conceive of the Infinite. Whence comes this conception? The body which perishes does not give it. It must proceed from an imperishable source. That source is Spirit, and the fountain of all Spirit is God. If therefore He lives forever, so must we. Deny this and you deny man to be spiritual, like him. You erase his image from our nature, and convert us into brute matter.

Turning now from the Soul to the recorded Revelation, I maintain that we can come to no other conclusion than that of man's immortality, from the lowest estimate we can make of Christianity. Call it by what name you please, deny its miracles, and affirm Jesus to have been merely an extraordinary spiritual teacher, still, you cannot expunge from his teachings the doctrine of human immortality. A future state was the burden of his preaching. If man perishes in the grave, then his words are all false.

But his Religion still exists. It has withstood the shocks of ages. Kings have leagued against it, but they could not overturn it. The people, mighty in their collective energy as the upheaved ocean, have not been able to suppress it; no, not to retard even, its onward and triumphant march. Before it ignorance has disappeared,

and sin stood awe-struck. It has the world in its train. Can this omnipotent principle be founded in an error? Was Jesus deluded? Were his apostles insane? Has the church done its noble work with scales on its eyes? Have this regeneration of social life, these political revolutions, the uprising of these free institutions, and this long series of secular blessings, all of which came from Christianity, been based on a falsehood? No, all nations, kindreds, ages, and tongues, reply no. Christianity is then true. Man not only shall have, but he already *has*, an everlasting life.

CHAPTER XII.

THE INSPIRATION OF THE ALMIGHTY UNIVERSAL.

WE are told in the Scriptures that, "There is a spirit in man, and the Inspiration of the Almighty giveth them Understanding." By this word "understanding," I suppose to be meant the same thing, in part, if not precisely, as we intend by the philosophical expressions, "The Reason," and "Intuition." If the one be interior, and known in its reception only to the individual, so also is the other. Nor can we place any limit to the teachings of Intuition, so far as the number of its subjects is concerned, except those, if there be any such, which the Scriptures place to the number whom God has inspired.

I remark, first, that, judging from experience, we must conclude that this view is correct. The truth embodied in the passage just quoted from Scripture, has been received more or less extensively, in all ages, by the savage and the civilized. That man is in communication with the Divinity was a doctrine of the remotest heathen antiquity.

The earliest records of Scripture teach that

God walked with man of old, and communed daily with this creature of his hand. The prophets and holy men of Judea continued in this faith. And when a chosen messenger was sent to redeem the ends of the earth, he likewise, and with the strongest emphasis, spake of the Holy Spirit or the breath of God, — as the original of that phrase imports,—being inspired, or which is the same sense otherwise expressed, being *breathed* into man. Thus Jesus breathed on his disciples and said, “receive ye the Holy Spirit.”

We are accustomed to employ the word Inspiration in many and various connections. The orator is said to breathe, or inspire, the breath of life and liberty into his oppressed countrymen; when they rise, with an almost divine energy, as did the patriots of the Revolution, and throw off the yoke of bondage. Washington inspired the American colonies with a spirit which prompted them to heroic deeds. In the Senate chamber, at the bar, in the halls of learning, the master-mind inspires thousands to the noblest efforts. Knowledge, zeal, courage, benevolence, self-sacrifice, devotion, all these are breathed by one spirit into others, and they do and dare like men.

The Pulpit, also, has its inspiration. We imagine an eloquent preacher “almost inspired,” as we express it, when his words quicken us

to an unaccustomed interest in divine truth. We speak of the Poet as a recipient of inspiration.

“ He spake inspired ;
Night and day, thought came unhelped, undesired,
Like blood to his heart.”

But as respects the inspirations of God, are they unlimited, in regard to the Time in which they are bestowed on man? Are they all past or may they be expected in the future? In the Wisdom of Solomon we read of a period when “Man knew not his Maker, and him that inspired into him an active soul.” From this and other similar language, we cannot doubt that, so far forth, that is, as regards the reception of a living Soul, every individual was inspired by God, at his birth. Does the Inspiration of the Almighty terminate here? Does he impart any gifts to man in addition to the Soul he gave him at his birth?

Paul, in speaking of the heathen nations, says, “They shew the work of the law written in their hearts;” and in another passage he affirms, “that which may be known of God is manifest in them, for GOD HATH SHEWED IT UNTO THEM.” But how did he show this knowledge unto them? It could have been only through Inspiration.

It is evident that the communications referred to cannot be considered as made to the heathen,

or to any other nation of past times alone. For the passage above quoted says, "The inspiration of the Almighty *giveth* man understanding," that is, he is now, daily, giving men understanding. Nor if we take the word "man" in this passage in its legitimate and common use, can we confine the inspiration of the Almighty to any particular portion of the race, whether Jews, Christians, or Heathen. To him who takes Scripture for truth the declaration is authoritative and plain. You may believe yourself specially inspired of God, but not until you can monopolize the light of day, compress the entire atmosphere into your particular church, chain the lightnings that they may purify your region alone, appropriate all the gentle showers and the gentler dews of heaven to your own little garden, not until then, can you refuse to share the inspirations of God with every individual of your race.

But the word inspiration commonly suggests only the idea of miraculous communications. "The well is so deep," say most men, "that we have nothing with which to draw its waters." Or they ask, "Who shall ascend to Heaven and bring God down to us?" They are looking, as it were, for the dove again to descend, as it did upon the Son of God. They expect, if they shall ever be inspired, to hear "the sound of a rushing, mighty,

wind"; or there must be an audible voice; come these, and then they shall know that "the Inspiration of the Almighty" is indeed upon them.

Yet do the Scriptures teach thus ? "The word is nigh thee, even in thy mouth, and *in thy heart*." To show that this language is not to be restricted, in its application, to a small class of mankind, we may read elsewhere that "God is not far from every one of us ; for in him we live, and move, and have our being." Surrounded, penetrated, and sustained, by the Almighty, as we all are, is it not true of us all that "his Inspiration giveth us Understanding?"

If what we have now said is true, it is not essential that God should operate on us supernaturally, in order to our receiving that inspiration just spoken of. He can inspire us by other than miraculous means and extraordinary methods. I proceed to speak, of what have appeared to me the ordinary and universal modes of communication from God to man.

His first mode of inspiration is through the disclosures of that Common Sense, by which we are led irresistibly to a perception of certain great truths. We are forced to believe, all men who exercise their common sense on the subject are forced to believe, in these truths. The "Inspiration of the Almighty" obliges them to

trace all that exists around and within them to a creative power. A belief in God and in his Providence is hence common to the race. No mind in a healthy and natural condition is ever destitute of it. Nor do we acquire it ; it is the gift of the Almighty. Under whatever name it exists, whether of Inspiration, or Intuition, we discover everywhere a spirit in man which is in communication with God.

Again, God inspires man through Conscience. We are told that our first parents, after they had eaten of the forbidden fruit, "heard the voice of the Lord God, walking in the garden, in the cool of the day ; and they hid themselves from the presence of the Lord God." What was that voice ? It might have been an audible sound. But there is another voice which makes us, when we have done wrong, seek to hide ourselves from God. There is a voice *within* us, as awful as the very words of God from his own lips. We are accustomed to say that "the voice of conscience is the voice of God." I understand this expression to be literally true ; it is not a fiction, but a reality. It is through this voice that "the inspiration of the Almighty" teaches us our duty, warns us against sin, rebukes our transgressions, and commends our well-doing.

But conscience is a universal gift. The savage, no less than the sage, enjoys its inspirations. He

cannot indeed analyze his sense of right and wrong, or embody his conceptions of it in philosophical language. He has no names for some of the virtues ; but still Conscience exists and operates in his breast. The elements of the virtues are all there. The anecdote of the North American Indian who found a silver dollar in some tobacco he had purchased, and was kept awake all the next night by what he called his "good man" and his "bad man" arguing with him, the one to return it to its owner, the other to keep it, is familiar to all, and it shows that the inspirations of conscience are felt in the rudest of mankind. The little child, when he acts spontaneously, acts in obedience to the voice of conscience. But when he turns away from God, and begins to argue about the comparative advantages of doing right and wrong, he resists the Heaven-sent inspirer, he acts contrary to the first promptings, and the purest ones, of his own God-directed spirit.

All are inspired, again, in the sentiment of Faith. We have animal instincts which lead us to gratify the appetites. So have we Spiritual instincts which direct the soul toward the unseen world. All nations believe in a God, and why ? Because they are conscious of spiritual existences ; they feel that whatever good they enjoy or practice is but an emanation from an upper and inex-

haustible Fountain of light. This is what John describes as the "true light which lighteth *every man* that cometh into the world." I do not say that every man refers the light within him directly to God, or that all in any manner account for it to themselves. But this I affirm, that the light always shines in man, whether he "comprehend" it or not. It is a lamp within him, without whose rays he could discern nothing spiritual. It is seen in the worship of the *fetich* by the African, no less than in the adoration of the Father by the Christian.

The enlightened Christian is, indeed, much more inspired than the savage, because unto him that hath and improveth, it is always given to have more abundantly. But, fundamentally, all men are constituted alike. The learned have no original faculties denied to the illiterate. In practice, and so far as the radical parts of our nature, Common Sense, Conscience, and the sentiment of Faith, are concerned, God has given no preëminence to one nation or individual above another. He giveth them all daily, light and aid, by his voice within them.

But here an objection will arise. "If," it will be said, "the Almighty breathes into all his children the 'understanding,' or affords them the intuitive suggestions, I describe, how can it be that even in Christian countries so many manifest a

deplorable Ignorance of God and Religion? Can it be that his very inspirations should produce so little effect?" I answer that the actual ignorance of men on the subject of the first principles of Religion is much less than we are apt to imagine. We may not judge of their knowledge by their conduct, for very few act up to the knowledge they possess. We must penetrate far beneath the external man, to know how much acquaintance with Religious truth one really has.

It should be remembered, too, that I am not speaking of men's knowledge of the outworks and supports of Religion, of those principles or kinds of evidence that it requires great logical acuteness to comprehend, but of that intuitive understanding or perception of God and duty, which is breathed into us by inspiration, and demands no effort on our part. What I would say is, as the accomplished author of Fitzosborne's Letters remarks, that "Providence does not seem to have intended that we should ever be in possession of demonstrative knowledge beyond a very limited compass; though," as he adds, "at the same time, it cannot be supposed, without the highest injustice to the benevolent Author of our natures, that He has left any *necessary* truths without *evident notes of distinction*."

But, it is asked, "If the Almighty inspires every

man, how can there be this amount of Sin in the world? Is it possible that a being breathed upon by God himself, could ever be thus depraved?" To this objection it may first be replied, that it is common to overestimate the real amount of sin in the world, and to undervalue men's good qualities. "The greatest virtues," says the writer just quoted, "have, probably, been ever the most obscure; * * * in all ages of the world, more genuine heroism has been overlooked and unknown, than either recorded or observed. That *aliquid divinum*, as Tully calls it, that celestial spark, which every man, who coolly contemplates his own mind, may discover within him, operates when we least look for it; and often raises the noblest productions of virtue in the shade and obscurity of life."

To speak, however, of that sin which unquestionably does exist, I affirm that it does not disprove the universal inspirations of God, since the influences of his Spirit are not irresistible. He has given his children, along with their "Understanding," the fearful power of withstanding the instructions he imparts through it. The inspiration of the Almighty comes over the Soul, like a soft breeze, to cool, refresh, and save, it. But if we wrap about us the thick garments of iniquity, we shall melt beneath their moral heat. God

bloweth on us with a gentle breath; man may create in himself such gales of passion and wickedness, that the divine inbreathings shall be all unperceived or unheeded.

I now observe that the inspiration of God must be universal, because only through this inspiration can man understand and receive an outward Revelation from God. The Bible is addressed to all mankind. It is not a book written for the Jew or Greek, the ancient or the modern, the heathen or the Christian, alone. It does not appeal to one particular portion of the race, and say to them "you alone can understand and receive the word of God; to you alone is his divine message sent." On the contrary the call is this, "*Whosoever will*, let him come and drink of the water of life freely."

There can then be no faculty, given to one and denied to another, arbitrarily, by which alone the Bible can be understood. Every man is placed on the same great level. All are invited to read it and live, and there can be no radical defect, either in their natural endowments, or as respects the present mode of communication between the Author of divine truth and themselves, which unfits any for understanding it.

But the Bible is an inspired book, that is, it proceeded from the Spirit of God. How then can ~~one~~ understand it? Evidently he must share the

very Spirit which gave us the Bible. It has been seen, in a preceding chapter, that we can comprehend nothing of which we do not, in some measure, ourselves partake. Love only can understand love, or the wise alone fully appreciate wisdom. We must therefore depend on the original capacities of the Soul. Before we can understand fully the divine pleasure, we must look within to know what that pleasure is. The Common Sense must have been exercised, in discerning between the good and evil ; Conscience must have been developed, in some measure, and enlightened ; and the sentiment of Faith must have been awakened and fostered. In one word we must exercise our native faculties. If there be no light in these, dark is our doom. If we do not all receive of God's inspirations, then a portion of our race are of necessity and forever excluded from understanding and obeying his revealed word.

Religion, I may here remark, is the essence of moral Beauty. There is a sentiment in our nature to which, in this aspect, it appeals. There is a "beauty of Holiness," no less than a beauty of Art. But the artist addresses an universal sentiment. In the words of another, he "who is to produce a work, which is to be admired not by his friends or his towns-people, or his contemporaries alone, but by all men ; and which is to be

more beautiful to the eye in proportion to its culture, must disindividualize himself, and be a man of no party, and no manner, and no age, but one through whom the soul of all men circulates, as the common air through his lungs. He must work in the spirit in which we conceive a prophet to speak, or an angel of the Lord to act, that is, he is not to speak his own words, or do his own works, or think his own thoughts, but he is to be an organ through which the universal Mind acts." The analogy here traced is correct. An inspired writer, like those of Scripture, would not appeal to the sentiment of moral Beauty, and yet an elect number only be endowed with that sentiment. None of the inspired, in one word, let their gift be what it may, can be understood and obeyed except by such as have, in some degree, shared in their inspiration. The manner and degrees are of course different, but both must proceed from the same source.

I would, in conclusion, revert to the value of Consciousness, as a witness for Christianity. Look at its power. How immeasurably superior is it to any power of matter. It is indivisible, while matter is not so; and union, concentration, is a main ingredient of all power. It is immutable, while all outward things change and decay. It is the basis of our conviction of personal identity, and hence

underlies and supports all the knowledge we have of every description, including that of matter. It contains in itself the vital ingredient of all proofs and realities. It speaks to us directly, and in such tones as cannot fail to be heard, while the material universe can speak to us only at a distance, through other agencies, and in a faint, and often wholly inaudible, voice.

Sufficient has been now ascertained in regard to the rival competitors for our confidence, to show that the Spirit is supreme among the powers of man. It is the presiding officer, the ruling principle, the mainspring, in all the energies we witness or feel. Until that decides and wills, the body is motionless, and nowise superior to any portion of matter. The soul utters its mandate, and the eye beams with intelligence, and the ear drinks in the sweet melodies of nature. We walk amid the fair objects of this earth, and taste its rich fruits, and enjoy its thousand sources of delight, because there is a Soul within these bodies. It acts; we reflect, reason, imagine and perform all the noble functions of an intelligent, and indefinitely improveable, being. It gives the command, and conscience, obedient to its voice, judges, decides, warns, rebukes, rewards. The Soul moves and inspires us, and we rise to the contemplation of the Lord of all Spirits; we revere

his majesty, and love and praise his excellence. It quickens us with an unwonted energy, and we break from the trammels of sense, and are straight-way absorbed in a new sphere of thought and action. It stretches forth beyond and above this little world, for higher objects. It thirsts for the Infinite, the Absolute, the Perfect. Who has not felt that earth was but a prison to his desires and aspirations? And are not these desires and aspirations, and this dissatisfaction with the limited, the relative, and the imperfect, real feelings, experienced without question, and existing as certainly as we exist? God is a spirit, and the soul is a spiritual thing, but if we can trust anything for truth, they are not deceptive, or doubtful existences, because they are spiritual. To say they are, is to strike at the root of all evidence.

So is it, that all we see, and all that we are, springs out of this invisible force. Spirit, whether in God, or man, whether on earth or in Heaven, is the controller of destinies, and the author of all results. Under these circumstances, can we consent to subjugate, in our minds, spirit to matter? The Soul an illusion! It cannot be. Sun, moon, and stars, may be an illusion. This body, flesh and blood, may be an illusion. All this fair, outward creation is sooner a mere pageant, than the soul. The spirit within me, that is a reality. I

may destroy all matter sooner than I can destroy that. The thing witnessed may deceive ; but the witness is true ; it can never be impeached ; let what will fail and perish, spirit is indestructible, and omnipotent.

Time was, when the mother told her child that the Bible was the word of God, and that all must believe in and obey it, without a single question. This was attempted. But in our more advanced years, questionings arose. We were then told that the Bible was true because it says so itself. But an age has come in which testimony is not admitted in one's own case, not though that case be Scripture itself. What is to save men from doubts about the records of Christianity, and a denial of their truth? Nothing, under God, but that "inspiration of the Almighty which giveth all men understanding." If we invalidate this, and deride the idea of any present inspirations, and any trust in Consciousness, and thus cut off all direct communication between the Soul and its God, and then call upon men to believe every thing in the Bible on its own, naked, *authority*, and deny them the use of their inspired "understanding" on the subject, then will men cast the Scriptures from them, and trust to their own unaided impulses, for salvation. Let the friends of humanity choose between these issues.

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